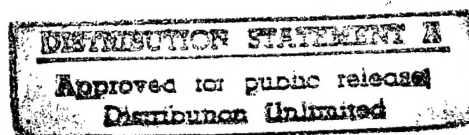




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Soviet Union

Military History Journal

No 3, March 1989

19980127 098

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Soviet Union

MILITARY HISTORY JOURNAL

No 3, March 1989

JPRS-UMJ-89-009

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4 August 1989

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MILITARY HISTORY JOURNAL

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Gromov on Afghan Experience

00010009a VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL
in Russian No 3, Mar 89 (signed to press 28 Feb 89)
pp 11-15

[Article, published under the heading "Afghanistan: Results and Conclusions," by Lt Gen B.V. Gromov: "They Protected, Taught and Built"]

[Text] "I am sending you my notes about the events which I was directly involved in in the land of Afghanistan, on the arising problems, on how our men fought and how they carried out battle tasks," this letter together with an article was sent to the editors just before the pullout of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan by the army commander, Hero of the Soviet Union, Lt Gen B.V. Gromov. By publishing this material, we are starting up a new heading "Afghanistan: Results and Conclusions." Appearing on the pages of the journal will be military leaders, experienced commanders and political workers who were directly involved in the events in Afghanistan. They will relate the actions of the motorized rifle troops, the artillerymen, airborne troops, military pilots, combat engineers and the men of other specialties, they will set out their own view and understanding of the problems which arose during the period of providing international aid to the Afghan people.

Upon the decision of the CPSU Central Committee and the Soviet government and in strict accord with the Treaty of the two countries and the UN Charter, Soviet troops at the end of 1979 were introduced into the territory of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. The war went on for 10 years. For 10 years the peaceful population of the cities and villages lived in constant tension and fear of coming under shelling and suffering irretrievable losses. Now we are leaving the territory of friendly Afghanistan. More often now I begin to reflect on what we gave the Afghan people, and I more frequently recall the days, months and years spent in Afghanistan as I have served there for more than a year. Initially in 1980-1982, I was the chief of staff and a commander of a formation and later in 1985-1986, the representative of the General Staff while now, in the concluding stage of our goodwill mission, I am the army commander. I have flown, driven and walked much over the Afghan land. There is not a single corner, unit or subunit where I have not been. All of the decisions which were taken for combat operations were coordinated by me with the command of the formations and units and with the leadership of the Afghan Republic and Armed Forces. Only after having made certain myself in the field under the specific conditions that the adopted decision was correct did I issue the order or operational instruction.

I recall Operation Mainline [Magistral]. The preparations for it and it itself were quite unusual.

First of all, a careful study was made of the terrain, the system for the engineer organization of the enemy defensive area, the approaches to it and the fire plan. Particular attention was given to the area of Satekundaw Pass, where the enemy was preparing to launch a decisive thrust against the Afghan and our troops. In working out the plan, we scrupulously studied the experience of conducting operations during the years of the Great Patriotic War in the Caucasus and Carpathians. If I recall, as the commander and leader of the combat operations in this operation, I was most concerned about ensuring concealment of the plan of combat and the surprise of launching a powerful blow against the enemy, as for carrying out Mainline we were to use both Soviet as well as Afghan troop subunits, units and formations. A leak of information could not be excluded.

The conduct of operations in mountains has its own particular features. It is very difficult to conceal the fire plan and the system of defenses. The man-made defensive structures of the enemy were hard to distinguish against the natural terrain. Under such conditions it was essential to defeat the enemy with the least losses for oneself. Having studied the combat area and having assessed the capabilities of our troops, the Afghan troops and the enemy troops, we took a decision to resort to strategem. One of the points of the collectively worked out plan provided for the following: having landed an assault force on the pass, to discover the defensive system, by artillery fire and air strikes to hit the enemy, to neutralize the heavy weapons emplacements and by an attack of the motorized rifle units and formations to complete the rout.

The military transport planes dropped the paratroopers in the area of Satekundaw Pass. A hail of fire immediately descended on them. Antiaircraft machine guns and guns went into operation. At this moment the rebel firing positions were blanketed by an accurate bombing and strafing attack of the Afghan and Soviet aviation. Then came artillery shelling. In a few hours, the entire fire plan of the rebels had been destroyed. We did not lose a single man, as the assault force was a dummy one.

In speaking to the delegates of the 19th All-Union CPSU Conference, I touched on many problems which had been encountered in Afghanistan. I considered the main one to be the problem of training the personnel to conduct a war, to reshape the awareness of the men from a peacetime to a wartime footing and their psychological training. In analyzing our Afghan days and the heavy fighting, one constantly wonders how quickly, when this is essential, our young soldiers who yesterday were students, workers and kolkhoz members and even so-called "heavy metalists" and rockers, in the course of service undergo true schooling in patriotism and internationalism and become aware of the real need for hard fighting against the enemy. Here a major contribution is

made by our officer personnel, political workers, party and Komsomol organizations. Love for the motherland and for one's people and loyalty to military duty have always distinguished the Soviet soldier. As had been the case during the years of intervention and in the years of the Great Patriotic War, so it will be in the future. It seems to me that precisely the manifestation of these qualities is the main, determining result of those hardships which befell our servicemen serving in Afghanistan.

In order to confirm this, let me give an example of the heroic conduct of the soldiers in combat. At the 19th Conference I spoke about Jr Sgt V. Aleksandrov and Pvt A. Melnikov. Now I would like to describe their feat in more detail. For it they were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

On 7 January 1988, the rebels opened up with massed rocket and mortar fire against elev. 3234 where the positions of the assault troops were located under the command of Guards Sr Lts S. Tkachev and Yu. Gagarin. The shelling lasted 40 minutes. Under its cover, armed groups of dushman dressed in black uniforms rushed to the assault, trying to outflank the elevation on two sides. Guards Pvt A. Melnikov and Guards Jr Sgt V. Aleksandrov were the first to open up submachine gun fire against the enemy. The enemy fell back. Soon thereafter a second assault began and now an attempt to outflank the elevation on three sides. And again the accurate bursts of the submachine gunners threw back the rebels. One hour and 10 minutes later there came the third, fiercest assault. In changing positions, the assault troops at point-blank range fired on the Dushman, calling in fire on themselves. When the third assault had been driven off and a short lull occurred, the men assembled in a tight circle, just as our soldiers did during the war years in Stalingrad and they held a brief meeting. The assault troops vowed not to surrender the elevation and to fight to the last round. On this day another six rebel assaults were driven off. In recalling such fighting, one involuntarily reflects on what strength of spirit our fellows had, what strength of will and dedication to the military oath and operational order!

Our men in Afghanistan carried out numerous feats. At times they rescued their comrades at the price of their own lives.

At present, a great deal is being written and spoken about Afghanistan. This question has seemingly emerged from under the covers of illicitness. However, in reading the articles and in viewing the broadcasts one becomes ashamed for our soldiers and particularly for the officer personnel. Often the notion creeps in about the lack of talent and lack of spirit of the officer commander and the narrowness of his viewpoint. If such cases did exist they are solitary ones and one must not judge the entire

officer corps from them. The command and the political section receive many letters from the parents of the soldiers with words of profound gratitude for the educating of their sons.

The former soldiers also write about their commanders and asked that they be pointed out in orders and somehow commended. The friendship born on the Afghan land under the difficult and dangerous situation between the officers, warrant officers ["praporshchik"], soldiers and sergeants lives on after the return to the motherland. The fellows who fought in Afghanistan organize meetings, they visit one another and visit the parents of fallen friends. Thus, many mothers who lost their sons have acquired new ones in the person of their comrades in arms. Let me substantiate what I say by giving an example of the affection of soldiers for their commander.

The wounded Sasha Koryavin with his body protected his commander against an enemy bullet. What caused him to carry out this action equal to a feat and who was the officer for him? I feel that Sasha realized that in the existing situation without the commander there would be more victims and it was better for one to be killed but to save comrades. The commander will always take the correct decision, he will carry out the battle order and protect his men. These and only these feelings possessed the soldier who determined to give up his own life.

Afghanistan is a mountainous country. Here there are no railroads and virtually everything required for the life support and combat activities of the troops is delivered by motor transport and only a small portion of the cargo by air. Delivery is carried out only over two routes: Termez—Kabul and Kushka—Qandahar. A decision was taken to guard the routes so that there were no losses either of equipment, personnel or delivered freight. Over the 9 years of escorting the columns, great experience was gained and this, I feel, will be studied, generalized and considered in the training of military specialists. The serving in outposts and studying the system of the recruitment and training of the personnel merit attention even now. Out of the entire limited contingent of Soviet troops in Afghanistan, 30-35 percent of the personnel guarded the lines of communications and the restricted zones, that is, they served at outposts. Who, where, when, in what combat training program is provision made for studying this question? One wonders whether the battalions and regiments should be used for conducting these combat actions. The men serve for 18-24 months on prevailing heights, at a significant distance apart, it might be said, while surrounded by the enemy. What should be the psychological compatibility, he endurance and tenacity in this group of 7-12 men as they have nothing more than the equipped shelter for rest and which they build by themselves from available material along with their equipment and weapons.

The supplies of food, water, ammunition, firewood and coal—all of this is delivered to the men for 2 weeks and sometimes even for a month. What do they have to say,

how can they live for these long days, weeks, months and years? But the men do live, they serve and carry out their battle tasks. In coming under attack and shelling they rebuff the enemy. Is this not a feat, courage and valor, is this not the readiness to endure the hardships and deprivations of military service? It is precisely in this situation that there is a feeling of collectivism, a friendship is struck up between the men of different nationalities. I see in this a vivid manifestation of the strength of spirit and mental stability.

The military traditions of the grandfathers and fathers. What great meaning can be found in them? In recalling the books and films about the Great Patriotic War, one involuntarily compares the episodes reflected in them with our Afghan life. In Germany in Treptow Park, a monument has been set up to the Soviet soldier carrying a rescued young girl. In the Afghan land one could also put up more than one such monument. In Qandahar, Ghardez, Ghazni and Baghrum our soldiers, without hesitating, provided help to the peaceful population, in subjecting their own lives to danger, they carried out the elderly and children, and they provided them with all sorts of aid including medical, food and even supplied water. But the noble mission of our soldiers did not consist merely of this. In fighting, they created. On the exhausted, war-devastated, tortured land of Afghanistan, the Soviet people built or rebuilt: 84 schools, lycees and secondary schools, 25 hospitals, 26 nurseries, 326 residences, 35 mosques, 48 wells, 53 bridges, 4 diesel power plants, they dug 41 wells, electrified 6 villages and dug and repaired 117 km of canals and ditches.

A wholehearted affection for the motherland lives in the hearts of our soldiers. This love is not only passed on from generation to generation but is also instilled, instilled by the entire system of political, military-patriotic and moral education. In experiencing pride for belonging to the motherland, the USSR, the internationalist soldiers carried high the honor and dignity of the Soviet soldier. As in the years of the Great Patriotic War, they demonstrated examples of courage and heroism. Better death than captivity. Hundreds of examples show this.

A group of scouts headed by Sr Lt Onishchuk attacked a caravan with weapons coming in from Pakistan territory, but was then surrounded by an enemy of superior strength. An unequal battle broke out. When ammunition was running out and there was the threat of being captured, Sr Lt Onishchuk, Jr Sgt Islamov and Pvt Muradov blew themselves and the dushman up with grenades. It would be possible to give many such examples.

The conduct of combat operations under Afghan conditions had a number of serious particular features. The mountain-desert terrain impeded actions in large groups. It was difficult to employ modern weapons and equipment. The fighting vehicles could move only along roads and these were often rather narrow, and the roadway ran

through rocks and over abysses. Considering this the dushman significantly increased the use of mines and land mines. The basic portion of them were set out ahead of time on the routes of the probable operations of Soviet and Afghan troops. As analysis showed, they basically mined the hard-to-reach sectors of roads, the accesses and approaches to water sources, bypasses, fords across rivers, abandoned villages and the approaches to base areas and dumps. Thus, just in 1988, the engineer troops detected, deactivated and destroyed 4,882 antitank mines, 3,800 antipersonnel mines and 1,162 land mines.

The conduct of Operations Mainline and Pamir, in escorting a column in November-December 1988 to Qandahar, Soviet combat engineers while working encountered an extremely difficult mine situation and they cleared thousands of mines on the roads Ghardez—Khost, Feyzabad—Qonduz, Shindand—Qandahar. Entire sections of road of scores and at times hundreds of meters were solidly mined. Mine warfare forced us to change our tactics and the structure of the battle formations of the columns. Thus, as a result of many analyses and expert checks, the current structure of a movement support detachment was worked out.

As of now it is still too early to sum up the military and political results of our activities in Afghanistan. I would not endeavor to do this. Here time will show the real results of our presence. Clearly, for a long time to come, the Afghan events will be a matter of close study by politicians, military historians and so forth. But even now it is clear that the combat experience gained in Afghanistan and paid for in the blood and sweat of our soldiers, sergeants, warrant officers and officers should actively serve the cause of restructuring [perestroyka] in the troops and the cause of increasing the quality of the combat skills of the personnel and without fail be considered in organizing the training process.

There is one other thing I would like to say. At present, when the Afghan question has ceased to be under wraps, many honest and objective publications have appeared but along with them one can also see materials of a completely different sort. Some, having "honored" the Afghan land by a visit of several days, set out to draw general conclusions and attempt to artificially create the problem of the "Afghaners" in the USSR, in highlighting and absolutizing certain individual negative facts and blacken the feat of the Soviet personnel who honorably carried out their international duty.

In line with this, ever-greater value is assumed by the appearances in print of the very participants of the event as they are able as no one else to distinguish truth from fiction and set out their own vision and understanding of the Afghan problem.

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Activities of State Defense Committee Examined
00010009b VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL
in Russian No 3, Mar 89 (signed to press 28 Feb 89)
pp 16-22

[Article, published under the heading "Soviet Military Art," by N.Ya. Komarov, candidate of historical sciences: "The State Defense Committee Decrees...; the article takes up certain questions of the organizational development and the strengthening of the combat might of the Soviet Army during the years of the Great Patriotic War]

[Text] On 22 June 1941, Hitler Germany, fed, armed and encouraged by reactionary imperialist circles unleashed its monstrous military machine against our country. In terms of the scope, fierceness, decisiveness of political and military goals, mankind had never known such a war. It has gone down in history as the largest armed clash between socialism and the shock forces of world imperialism and required from the Soviet state an unprecedented bending of all economic and moral capabilities.

The Communist Party and the state authorities effectively reorganized work in the interests of fighting the enemy. The principle of maximum centralization of political, economic and military leadership underlay this restructuring.

Even on 30 June 1941, the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)] Central Committee and the USSR Council of People's Commissars [SNK] approved a decree on organizing the State Defense Committee (GKO). The decree, in particular, stated that all power in the state was to be concentrated in the hands of the GKO. All citizens and all party, soviet, Komsomol and military bodies were obliged unswervingly to carry out the decisions and orders of the GKO.¹ I.V. Stalin was approved as the GKO chairman, V.M. Molotov was the deputy chairman and its members included K.Ye. Voroshilov, L.P. Beriia and G.M. Malenkov. Some time later, N.A. Bulganin, N.A. Voznesenskiy, L.M. Kaganovich and A.I. Mikoyan became members of the GKO.

A similar form of superior military-political authority had existed previously in the Soviet state. The GKO prototype was the Council of Worker and Peasant Defense which was established during the years of the Civil War and intervention and was headed by V.I. Lenin. It played an exceptionally important role in ensuring the victory of the Soviet state over the domestic and foreign counterrevolution.

However, the extraordinary bodies of authority during the years of the Civil and Great Patriotic Wars differed very substantially and primarily in terms of the methods of activity. The main feature of the Council of Worker and Peasant Defense was the fact that it did not replace the party, government and military bodies. At that time

the fundamental questions of conducting the armed struggle were examined by the Politburo and the Central Committee plenums, at congresses of the RKP(b) [Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik)] and at the SNK sessions.

During the years of the Great Patriotic War, no plenums and particular party congresses were held and all the fundamental questions were settled by the GKO. The urgent tasks of strengthening the nation's defense capability were reviewed by Stalin in closest unity with the political, economic and military spheres and this provided an opportunity, from the viewpoint of the GKO chairman, of concentrating the nation's political and military efforts on solving the urgent problems of defending our state and on increasing the combat capability of the Army and Navy. Finally, this ensured the reality of embodying the unity of political, economic and military leadership over the entire system of socialist social relations. Local extraordinary bodies were also organized under the GKO decision and these included the municipal defense committees which brought all civilian and military power into their hands. They consisted of a chairman (the secretary of the party obkom or gorkom), a deputy (chairman of the oblast or city soviet), the commander of the district (front), the district (front) military council member and a representative of the MKVD [People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs].

The local defense committees directed the activities of the local party, economic, trade union and Komsomol organizations in the interests of the front, they exercised their functions in close contact with the local soviets, they were concerned with military mobilizational work, they organized the people's militia, the construction of defensive perimeters, the production and repair of military equipment at local enterprises, that is, they were concerned with virtually all questions related to organizing the rebuff of the enemy.

Such committees were established in Leningrad, Stalin-grad, Sevastopol, Tula, Kalinin, Rostov-na-Donu and Kursk—a total of in more than 60 of the nation's cities. The duty of unswervingly carrying out the decisions and orders of these extraordinary wartime bodies was entrusted to the citizens and institutions.

The GKO consistently provided leadership over the entire course of restructuring the nation to a wartime footing. In recalling the style of its work, the Chief of the Red Army Rear Services, Gen A.V. Khrulev, in his memoirs wrote: "The GKO members always freely entered the office of the GKO chairman when they reported the prepared draft decrees and each in his area of activity. The military leaders, the people's commissars and other responsible persons were continuously reporting here and not only upon summons but also upon their own initiative if they had a major and crucial question. The GKO sessions did not exist in the usual understanding, that is, with a certain agenda, secretaries and minutes."²

The GKO did not establish its own directly subordinate bodies. Depending upon the developing situation in the rear and on the front, under the GKO there were temporarily or constantly various councils, committees, commissions and bureaus. When necessary they produced the corresponding decrees and when they had fulfilled their functions they were disbanded.

On behalf of the GKO, the questions, as a rule, were examined individually by its chairman or by individual members. Characteristic of the work of the GKO was the fact that even the most important problems of state life and military organizational development were often resolved without observing democratic procedure, by mere interrogation. Such an approach often led to subjectivism, however under the existing condition it was inevitable. As is known, during the period of the war, Stalin held a whole series of the most important party, state and military posts. He was the General Secretary of the VKP(b) Central Committee, the Chairman of the USSR SNK, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, and the USSR People's Commissar of Defense, and he headed Headquarters Supreme High Command [Hq SHC]. During a day he took hundreds of decisions related to various aspects of armed combat and the work of the rear services. The reference material provided by the people's commissariats and departments often did not figure in the plans. Thus, a mechanism of an administrative-command system of leadership went into effect.

But over time under the effect of different factors, Stalin's work style began to change. He began more to consider objective reality and the opinion of other leaders. The viewpoint of "what I have decided should be" gave way to more sober positions based upon a consideration of the real state of affairs. His view began to be formed differently: "We can do only what is possible."

Gradually a sort of mechanism was worked out for preparing and adopting GKO decrees, for example, on military questions. Usually a preliminary outline of the decision was made by the GKO chairman within a narrow group of officials. As a rule, these were certain members of the Politburo of the VKP(b) Central Committee and the GKO. The presence here of the chief of the Red Army General Staff was obligatory.

It also happened that the work relating to a certain question took several days. In the course of this the GKO chairman received the necessary written information and verbal proposals from the main directorates of the USSR NKO [People's Commissariat of Defense], the directorates of the General Staff and from the front commanders. Then again in a narrow group the possible variations were examined and the optimum one adopted. The decision was formulated in the form of a Directive of Hq SHC or orders of the USSR People's Commissar of Defense. Representatives of Hq SHC were sent out for supervising the execution of measures for the operation being prepared and for its conduct by the front

or group of fronts, and the representatives were fully responsible for its successful conduct. A predominant majority of the former executors of the GKO decrees or persons directly involved in them are unanimous in their opinion that this was a hard, extremely difficult but heroic time totally dedicated to the cause of the defense of the socialist motherland. Many years of the author's contact with scores of persons of varying official levels, from different professions and nationalities confirms this viewpoint. No matter how harsh were the decisions of the GKO in terms of dates, technical conditions of implementation or military considerations, their execution was an inexorable law for at that time they knew and believed totally that each line in a decree of our highest military-political body was completely subordinate to one goal of victory over the enemy.

Under the extreme wartime conditions, the result of the strict centralization was an efficient and concrete solution to practical questions. Every day these arose in scores and hundreds and required coordination and clarification. The scale of GKO activity can be judged from the fact that over the time of its existence (from 30 June 1941 through 4 September 1945), it adopted 9,971 decrees and decisions. Around two-thirds of these in one way or another related to the economy and to the organization of military production.

Hundreds of GKO decrees and decisions were adopted on military questions, in exercising leadership over the USSR Armed Forces, and this actually encompassed all aspects of their activities. This consisted, on the basis of considering the political and economic conditions and existing situation on the front, of ensuring that the Army and Navy would repel the aggression and defeat the enemy. In this regard the GKO posed immediate and long-range tasks for the Armed Forces, it improved the organizational structure of the Army and Navy, it placed leading personnel and determined the overall nature of the employment of the front field forces in armed combat. The People's Commissariats of Defense and Navy were the working bodies of the GKO on military questions and the immediate organizers and executors of its decisions. Strategic leadership over the armed combat was carried out by the GKO through Hq SHC.

The level of GKO leadership over the USSR Armed Forces was significantly higher than the level of Nazi leadership. Our extraordinary body, as a rule, carried out its plans more flexibly and efficiently, it was more farsighted in planning and more mobile and decisive in the methods of implementing them. Leadership by the GKO would have been even more efficient had there not been the essential flaws which were determined primarily by the cult of personality of I.V. Stalin.

The last war with complete clarity showed that the functions of superior military-political leadership in defending the victories of socialism in the course of the war grew significantly more complex and required bold, nonroutine solutions which did not have any previous

analogs and at times unforeseen problems in the integrated execution of many economic and military questions. Regardless of these difficulties, the GKO was able basically correctly to carry out the planned measures of national defense.

The GKO carried out its activities under extremely difficult and unfavorable conditions in the first period of the war (22 June 1941—18 September 1942). The Nazi hordes pushed hundreds of kilometers into the interior of the USSR. Their active offensive actions were the result of the early mobilization of Germany's Armed Forces and the restructuring of its economy and state system long before the start of aggression. The Wehrmacht had 2 years of experience in waging war. The Soviet Army did not have such experience. Its combat capability and readiness had been substantially influenced by the tyranny and repression against the military personnel from the regimental level up to the General Staff. As a result, the command personnel had been significantly replaced on the eve of the war and it still had not mastered the practical skills of commanding large formations and operational field forces. The new combat equipment being delivered to the units and subunits had not been received in sufficient amounts and had not been sufficiently mastered by the personnel. The reasons for the failings are to be found in a number of other military as well as economic and political factors.

The GKO endeavored to overcome these and even in July adopted several large-scale decrees aimed at improving the forms of leadership over the Army and Navy, at strengthening their combat might and increasing combat readiness.

The speed of the operations, their enormous scope along the front and in depth and the breakthroughs by the enemy panzer and mechanized groupings created serious difficulties in leading the combat operations of the Soviet troops directly from Headquarters and the General Staff. There was the urgent question of changing the system of operational-strategic command over the forces of the army in the field in order to bring this closer to the troops. On 10 July, the GKO formed three high commands of the strategic sectors: Northwest, West and Southwest. The decree obliged the high commands of the strategic sectors to coordinate efforts and organize cooperation between the fronts and fleets on the level of operational leadership and be concerned for maintaining high morale of the Red Armymen and commanders. At the same time, the high commands were made responsible for leadership of the partisan movement in the rear of the Nazi troops.

Of course, the given decree had a direct impact on the course of armed combat. However, there also were factors which had a negative influence on the activities of the high commands of the strategic sectors. It is well known that the strength and effectiveness of leadership of any superior level depends upon its real activities to

set and carry out combat tasks and for this it is essential to possess the appropriate reserves, command system and communications. The organized high commands of the sectors lacked precisely this. In 1941, they were disbanded. In truth, in the following year the Western and Southwestern Sectors were restored for several months and a new Northern Caucasus Sector was even organized. But in May-June 1942, they were finally eliminated.

Under the very difficult conditions of the initial period of the war, the problem of mobilizing the population was very difficult. The army in the field each day required constantly new reserves. It was essential to determine the probable demand of the fronts for personnel and to work out an efficient system of registration and mobilization which would meet the conditions of fighting.

The General Staff carried out all mobilization functions. In order to free it as the working body of Headquarters, the GKO adopted radical measures. By its decision it removed from the General Staff the tasks related to organizational questions, to the constituting of new units and formations, to training drafts of reinforcements for the army in the field and calling up reservists. On 16 July, the GKO adopted the Decision "On Training Reserves in the System of the NKO and Navy." In accord with this, within the system of the NKO, a special group was to be organized for constituting divisions, antitank and artillery regiments and this then became the Main Directorate for the Constituting and Manning of the Soviet Army (Glavuproform). Army Commissar 1st Rank Ye.A. Shchadenko was appointed its chief.

Such a GKO decision was largely determined by the very difficult situation which arose in the first weeks of the war. However, the development of events on the Soviet-German Front and the experience gained in the difficult situation indicated that while the questions of troop mobilization and manning in wartime actually can and should be carried out by Glavuproform, this could not be done in terms of organizational questions (composition, size, structure of the Armed Forces, the ratio of services and combat arms in their composition, the working out of methods and ways for maintaining a constant conformity of them to the nature of the war, operation and combat depending upon the available combat equipment, the requirements of armed combat and so forth). Actual work soon disclosed this shortcoming and showed that the organization of the troops was a concern for the General Staff and forced the GKO to amend the previously taken decision.

In the republics, krays and oblasts, enormous work got underway to create reserves and new troop formations. This was carried out by the military councils of the districts, by the local commissariats and by the party and soviet bodies. The stationing of the personnel of newly formed divisions, their weapons, supply, clothing and training were carried out with maximum consideration of local capabilities.

The results of the decisions adopted by the GKO were felt more and more tangibly with each passing day. By the end of 1941, 292 divisions and 94 brigades had been sent to the army in the field: 70 divisions from the interior military districts and 27 from the Far East, the Transcaucasus and Central Asia, along with 194 newly constituted divisions and 94 brigades.³

In September 1941, the GKO adopted the Decree "On the M-8 and M-13 Mortar Units." In accord with this, special headquarters bodies were organized with the position of commander being established and the military council and Main Directorate for the Weapons of the Guards Mortar Units [rocket units] being formed.

Due to the farsighted and prompt GKO decisions, the Soviet rockets developed into a new promising type of artillery having its own weapons system, organization, methods of firing and forms of combat application. From individual batteries used at the outset of the war, the rocket artillery developed into large formations. In no other army of the world involved in World War II did rocket artillery gain such extensive development.

A characteristic trait of these and other GKO decrees was the qualitative and quantitative growth of new types of weapons in the Ground Forces. Their combat employment showed great effectiveness and contributed to the successful conduct of the fighting.

In the first period of the Great Patriotic War, the GKO adopted a series of decrees on the questions of national air defense. Among them were some which were balanced, profoundly thought out and directed to the future but there were also those which were simply unfeasible due to objective factors. On 9 July 1941, the GKO adopted the Decree "On the Air Defense of Moscow." This set out a broad program for increasing the capital's air defense.⁵ There was a significant increase in the number of antiaircraft weapons, fighter aircraft, barrage balloons and other weapons for combating Hitler's Luftwaffe.

During the years of World War II the Nazi aviation caused significant damage to many cities of Europe, including the capitals of the Western states. London suffered heavily. Warsaw was turned into ruins. However, the enemy was unable to carry out its intentions in terms of the capital of the Soviet Union, although in the autumn of 1941, the front line on certain sectors ran just 2- or 3-score kilometers from Moscow.

Less than 2 weeks later, on 22 July 1941, the GKO adopted a Decree "On Air Defense of Leningrad." This also outlined a significant reinforcing of the antiaircraft artillery units and the fighter aviation regiments with new combat equipment and ammunition. The decree emphasized that all the next deliveries by industry after supplying the antiaircraft units of Moscow would go to organizing the II Air Defense Corps covering Leningrad.

At present, it can be stated that the decree came too late, without considering the rapid advance of Army Group North toward the city on the Neva. In the first place, fierce fighting was already going on on the distant approaches to Leningrad, and soon thereafter the ring of the enemy blockade closed around it. Secondly, the People's Commissariats of Armament and Ammunition during that period had not carried out the set plans for the production of antiaircraft weapons and particularly ammunition. For this reason it was virtually impossible to increase, as the GKO decree provided, the number of 35-mm antiaircraft weapons, searchlights and virtually double the unit of fire of artillery rounds, particularly after doing this for Moscow air defenses.

The first raids against Leningrad after its blockading from the land led to great human casualties and to the significant destruction of a number of industrial enterprises and food storage facilities. The city suffered particularly from air attacks in September-October 1941. For repelling these there was not enough primarily of modern combat equipment and ammunition.

The further course of events showed that the adopted GKO decrees on the air defense of Moscow and Leningrad did not resolve the problems as a whole and with each passing week the situation grew worse, clearly showing that the cover of economic regions and installations against enemy air strikes was a strategic task and the Soviet state needed a dependable integrated system of national air defense.

At the same time, the fighter aviation as before in organizational terms was isolated from the remaining air defense forces and was used primarily in the interests of the Ground Forces. The command of the border military districts which had been turned into fronts, in being involved with directing the combat activities of the troops, was unable to pay proper attention to a reliable cover for the rear installations. At the same time, the rapid advance of the enemy into the interior of Soviet territory strengthened the threat of its air strikes against the major economic and industrial centers.

In a word, the essential objective conditions had matured for fundamental changes in national air defense. An impetus to implement these was an instance of an overflight by an enemy aircraft in the Voronezh area. The author at one time happened to become acquainted with the diary entries of the former Chief of the Main Staff of the National Air Defense Troops, Col Gen N.N. Nagornyy. He pointed out: "The extremely important decree of the GKO on air defense was preceded by the case of an unopposed overflight by an enemy aircraft in the skies over Voronezh. The Military Commissar of the Main Air Defense Directorate, Corps Commissar P.K. Smirnov, and I were summoned to I.V. Stalin. Here, in the Kremlin, it was clarified that the fighter aviation under the air defense command was covering only Moscow, Leningrad and Baku; over the remaining territory of the nation there was no fighter

aviation under the air defense bodies. The GKO chairman recognized such a situation to be intolerable. The main provisions of the essential measures were immediately drawn up and these were incorporated in the GKO Decree.⁶

This decree "On Strengthening and Reinforcing Air Defense of the Territory of the Soviet Union" was adopted on 9 November 1941. In accord with it the position of commander of the Air Defense Troops of the Nation's Territory was established and he would also be the deputy people's commissar of defense for air defense. Maj Gen M.S. Gromadin was appointed to this position. Under the commander of the Air Defense Troops of the Nation's Territory, they established headquarters bodies including: a staff, a fighter aviation directorate, an antiaircraft artillery directorate, personnel for the other chiefs of the air defense combat arms and services. The Air Defense Troops were taken away from the commanders of the military districts and fronts and put in all terms under the commander of the Air Defense Troops of the Nation's Territory.

The measures adopted by the GKO were timely. The Air Defense Troops of the Nation's Territory substantially improved the cover for the most important political and industrial centers of the USSR.

Fundamentally new organizational changes also occurred in the Air Forces. In accord with the GKO decisions, during the first period of the war they began constituting air armies of the fronts as well as homogeneous air divisions. The long-range bomber aviation was reorganized as the long-range aviation. At the same time, the GKO adopted a decree on subordinating the Main Administration of the Civil Air Fleet to the Air Forces commander. The implemented measures contributed to the massing of aviation on the crucial sectors and facilitated the questions of command.

On 22 January 1942, the GKO reviewed the questions related to the Soviet Army Air Forces and adopted an appropriate decree. This, for the first time during the war, reflected the idea dictated by the requirements of the combat situation of establishing an air reserve of the Supreme High Command. This was organized with 24 air regiments and their basing was planned on the main strategic axis. For supplying the newly created units, the People's Commissariat of the Aviation Industry was ordered to send 570 aircraft to the front before 2 February.

The GKO decree was being implemented at a time when the Air Force's leadership was being taken over by Gen A.A. Novikov who possessed good military training and great organizational abilities. He had introduced much that was new into the theory and practice of the employment of aviation. At one time, upon the author's request, Ch Mar Avn A. Novikov commented on this GKO decree. He emphasized: "As for the reserves, the 24 air regiments which were organized in accord with the GKO

decree, this was, as they say, only the first hint of what was to come. In the autumn of 1942, when domestic industry began supplying the Air Forces with an ever-increasing amount of combat equipment and we possessed experienced personnel, air corps of the RVGK [Reserve Supreme High Command] were established. The massed employment of aviation had a great impact on the outcome of the armed combat on the land and sea theaters of military operations."⁷

The Navy was also strengthened. By a GKO decision in the initial period of the war, construction of small surface ships was resumed including: torpedo boats, small submarine chasers, minesweepers and patrol boats. In September 1942, the GKO adopted a decree on strengthening the Northern Fleet: its strength was to additionally include 12 submarines, surface vessels as well as bomber and fighter air brigades. Help was also provided to the Baltic Fleet which played an important role in the heroic defense of Leningrad.

Specific measures were taken to protect the Soviet Navy. In March 1942, the GKO adopted a decree for establishing personnel from the People's Commissariat of the Navy in the United States, Great Britain and Iran for guarding vessels and cargo en route and at anchor. Naval shipment sections of the USSR Navy were established in the designated countries. They were given the task of establishing ties with the Anglo-American Naval Command on the questions of organizing convoys, escorting Soviet vessels and their security.

On 18 October 1941, the GKO adopted a decree on constituting rifle naval brigades. These were employed successfully on various sectors of the Soviet-German Front and made a noticeable contribution to stabilizing the situation.

The war made organizational adjustments also in the work of the Soviet Army Rear Services.

The Armed Forces received an extended system for managing the rear services and this provided a close and direct link with the national economy as well as the correct and rational use of material resources. Such a system for controlling the rear services proved fully effective and was basically kept until the war's end.

The adoption of the designated GKO decrees was carried out in a complex and at times dramatic situation of the first period of the war. In line with the extraordinary situation, the GKO on 12 October adopted the decree "On Building the Third Defensive Line of Moscow." On 20 October, it introduced a state of siege in the capital and adjacent areas.

The defenders of Moscow held out. As a result of the stubborn struggle and counterstrikes at the end of November and the beginning of December, the last attempts by the enemy to break through to the capital were thwarted. Conditions were created for going over to a counteroffensive.

At the end of March 1942, the GKO and Hq SHC examined the strategic plan

for the operations of the USSR Armed Forces for the spring-summer period. They drew erroneous conclusions, assuming that the main events would again occur on the western sector. For this reason, a strategic defensive was chosen as the main method of combat for the Soviet troops with individual offensive operations at Leningrad, in the area of Demyansk, on the Smolensk and Lgov-Kursk axes, at Kharkov and in the Crimea. The forces were concentrated on the western sector.

In April-May the armed forces of the Nazi bloc succeeded in resuming the offensive and initially achieved definite successes. The enemy captured the Crimea and this abruptly changed the situation on the Black Sea and as a whole on the southern wing of the Soviet-German Front. The Nazis had acquired the shortest route to the Caucasus over the Kerch Strait. Soviet troops also suffered a setback at Kharkov. However, the enemy was unable to realize its plan completely and encircle the main forces of the Southwestern and Southern Fronts. But it did achieve significant successes: it occupied the Donbass, it reached the great arc in the Don and established an immediate threat to Stalingrad and the Northern Caucasus.

The defeats of the Soviet Army on the southern wing of the Soviet-German Front could not be explained by the particular features of the situation and which to a certain degree could serve as justification for our defeats in the summer of 1941. The main reason for the defeat of the 1942 summer campaign was the erroneous decision of the GKO chairman to "suspend" numerous particular offensive operations on all fronts to the strategic defensive. This led to the scattering of forces and to the premature expenditure of the strategic reserves and this clearly doomed Stalin's plan to defeat.⁸

In July 1942, the operation commenced with the aim of defending Stalingrad. The Soviet troops ground down and bled white the main enemy grouping and this was a major turning point on the path to victory and it prepared the necessary conditions for the going over of the Soviet Army to a counteroffensive at Stalingrad.

Thus, the activities of the GKO during the first period of the war in terms of the organizational improvement and strengthening of the combat might of the Soviet Armed Forces basically corresponded to the nature of the armed combat. At the same time, the mistakes made told severely on the nation's defense capability. The Soviet state suffered enormous human and material losses.

The activities of the GKO in the second period of the war were determined primarily by the developing situation on the Soviet-German Front and by the objective necessity of completing the fundamental turning point in the war, the start to which was made by the counteroffensive of our troops at Stalingrad. In utilizing the

success of the battle on the Volga, the Soviet troops in January 1943 carried out Operation Iskra [Spark] and breached the blockade of Leningrad. With its conclusion a turning point was reached in the battle for the city on the Neva. Our troops improved their operational-tactical situation on the other sectors of the Soviet-German Front.

The fundamental change in the war was brought about by many factors, but not last was the work of the Soviet rear. The strong economy made it possible to supply the Army and Navy with everything essential for the fighting. During the second period of the war the GKO surmounted the difficulties confronting it: it strengthened the military logistical base, it reinforced new economic ties between individual enterprises and entire industrial sectors and eliminated the lag of metallurgy and the fuel-energy base behind the growing needs of the defense industry.

Naturally, the GKO constantly kept in its field of vision the crucial sectors of defense production, particularly aviation and tanks. Upon its instructions these sectors began planning product output for an entire month. The plans were approved by the GKO members and reported at the designated times by the people's commissariats.

The army was widely supplied with combat equipment and in ever-increasing amounts it began to receive tanks and SAU [self-propelled artillery mount], combat aircraft and ships, artillery pieces and mortars, small arms and ammunition.

The GKO adopted a number of decrees related to improving the organizational forms and the headquarters bodies of the army, to strengthening the command personnel and improving party political work. Above all, the GKO drew attention to the strengthening of the rifle troops. They were reinforced with a large amount of artillery and automatic weapons. The rifle divisions were converted to unified TOE. The number of corps increased constantly and their organization and establishment differed significantly from the corps of the first period of the war. The new formations were more maneuverable and better met the needs of conducting offensive combat.

The changes occurring the methods of fighting required a further improvement in the RVGK artillery and this by the end of 1942 numbered over 1,200 different regiments and battalions. The war's experience persuasively showed that the scattering of the RVGK artillery in small units and subunits impeded the massing of artillery fire. In developing the artillery offensive in the operation at Stalingrad, together with comrades on the staff of the Soviet Army Artillery Chief, we proposed employing the artillery in a concentrated manner, massing it on the breakthrough sectors and maximally increasing fire density. Our proposal, naturally, involved a change in the organizational forms of the artillery, recalled K.P. Kazakov.

The Soviet Army Artillery Commander, N.N. Voronov, reported to the GKO chairman on the advisability of setting up artillery divisions which would be a new form in the organization of the artillery and capable of playing an important role in the Stalingrad counteroffensive. These divisions, according to our plan, should become constantly active and well commanded strong artillery fists. I.V. Stalin approved the proposal and they began constituting artillery divisions by uniting the artillery regiments.

The experience of the offensive fighting clearly showed the necessity of creating self-propelled artillery units. On 6 December 1942, the GKO adopted a decision on producing the SAU. In a short period of time, the first 30 self-propelled artillery regiments of the RVGK had been constituted. Four of them as an experiment participated in the fighting on the Western and Volkhov Fronts. On 6 April 1943, the Chief of Staff of the Soviet Army Artillery, Maj Gen F.A. Samsonov, reported to the GKO: "Experience has shown that the self-propelled weapons are essential, as no other type of artillery has produced such an effect in constantly supporting the infantry and tank assaults and in cooperation with them in close combat."⁹ The supplying of the SAU to the troops in 1943 began to be carried out at an accelerated pace.

Footnotes

1. "SSSR v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne 1941-1945 gg." [The USSR in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1970, p 26.
2. VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 6, 1961, p 66.
3. "50 let Vooruzhennykh Sil SSSR" [Fifty Years of the USSR Armed Forces], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1968, p 273.
4. [Not in text]
5. Moscow and the Moscow Economic Region were covered against enemy air strikes by troops of the Moscow Air Defense Zone which included the I Air Defense Corps, the VI Fighter Air Corps and the Tula and Kalinin Brigade Air Defense Regions.
6. From the personal memoirs of N.N. Nagornyy.
7. From the personal memoirs of A.A. Novikov.
8. KOMMUNIST, No 9, 1988, p 92.
9. "Istoriya Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny Sovetskogo Soyuz 1941-1945" [History of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union of 1941-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1964, p 213.

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Use of Aerial Ramming (Taran) in WWII Studied
00010009c VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL
in Russian No 3, Mar 89 (signed to press 28 Feb 89)
pp 24-30

[Article by Maj Gen Avn A.D. Zaytsev, professor: "The Chronicle of Aerial Ramblings"]

[Text] **An Air Ram—This method of air combat was born in Russia.**

Even in 1914, our compatriot Staff Capt P.N. Nesterov, having employed a ram, downed an enemy aircraft. In the 1930s, Soviet pilots repeatedly employed a ramming in carrying out their international mission abroad. Thus, in Spain, Lt Ye.N. Stepanov, in participating in repelling an enemy air raid against Barcelona during the night of 25 October 1937, destroyed a Savoia-Marchetti-81 bomber. There is every reason to assume that this was the world's first nighttime aerial ramming. In 1938, the volunteer aviators N.P. Zherdev, S.A. Lukovnikov and S.L. Maksimenkov dealt with the Nazi vultures in a similar manner. At approximately this same time in China, our pilots V.Ye. Sharay and A.A. Gubenko rammed Japanese bombers, respectively, over Nanchang and Hankow, having then safely landed their damaged aircraft. In July-August 1939, over the Mongolian skies aerial ramblings were carried out by Sr Lt V.F. Skobarikhin, Capt V.P. Kustov, Lt A.F. Moshin and Sr Lt V.G. Rakhov.

However, the aerial ram became a truly mass phenomenon during the years of the Great Patriotic War. Not provided for in any manual except the Manual of love for the motherland, it was immediately taken up by Soviet aviators. There were heroes of the aerial ramblings on the first day of the war.... For a long time, nothing was known about them. This is not surprising as not all feats immediately become widely known. At present, there are data on 14 pilots out of the 15 who carried out a ram on 22 June 1941.

In the morning of that day, the aviators of the 46th Fighter Air Regiment (iap) engaged a group of Nazi bombers. The flight commander, Sr Lt I.I. Ivanov, fought desperately. When the ammunition had run out, he noticed that one of the HE-111 was endeavoring to break through to our airfield. Without hesitating the pilot blocked the Nazi's path with his aircraft. This occurred at 0425 hours.¹ Thus, the former Smith of the Chizhovskiy Kolkhoz in Shehelkovskiy Rayon of Moscow Oblast began the count of aerial rams of the Great Patriotic War. It is interesting that all of this happened not far from the place where P.N. Nesterov carried out such a feat for the first time in the history of aviation.

Almost simultaneously with Ivanov, an enemy reconnaissance plane was rammed in the Belorussian skies by the flight commander from the 124th iap, Jr Lt V.D. Kokorev. He successfully belly-landed his damaged fighter.² The failure of his aircraft gun prevented him

from destroying the enemy by any other manner. Between 0500 and 0600 hours in the morning, rams were made by the following: in the skies of Moldavia by the deputy squadron commander of the 67th iap, Sr Lt A.I. Moklyak; in the area of Stanislav (Western Ukraine), by the flight commander from the 12th iap, Jr Lt L.G. Butelin; in the area of Pruzhany (Brest Oblast), by the deputy squadron commander of the 33d iap, Lt S.M. Gudimov, and in the area of Belostok (over the town of Bygoda) by a still unknown Soviet pilot in a U-2 aircraft.³

During the following hour, aerial combat was concluded employing the designated method by the deputy squadron commander of the 86th High-Speed Bomber Air Regiment (sbap), Lt T.S. Maliyenko, over Terebovl in Ternopol Oblast, flight commander of the 10th iap, Lt V.S. Loboda, in the area of Shyaulay and the squadron commander of the 16th sbap, Capt A.S. Protasov, over the airfield of Cherlyany (Lvov Oblast).⁴ The flight commander from the 126 iap, Jr Lt Ye. M. Panvilov, at 0830 hours rammed an enemy aircraft close to the town of Dolubovo (Belorussia).⁵ At about 1000 hours over Brest in a dogfight of four Soviet pilots from the 123d iap against 8 ME-109, flight commander, Lt P.S. Ryabtsev, downed one aircraft by a blow from his Chayka (I-153).⁶

Virtually at the same time in the Lida area (Grodno Oblast), the deputy squadron commander for political affairs of the 127th iap, Sr Polit Instr A.S. Danilov engaged nine ME-110. He set two Nazi fighters afire and struck a third with his own maimed aircraft.⁷ The men of the ground units who watched the dogfight felt that the Soviet pilot had perished. An editorial in the newspaper KRASNAYA ZVEZDA announced the following: "The deputy squadron commander for political affairs, Sr Polit Instr A.S. Danilov, engaged nine enemy aircraft in battle. Several moments later and two of them were downed. Having used up all his cartridges, the intrepid pilot aimed his aircraft directly at an enemy plane. Andrey Danilov died the death of the brave."⁸ On the same page they published an Ukase of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet awarding Andrey Stepanovich Danilov the Order of Lenin.

But the senior political instructor had not been killed. Heavily wounded, he was picked up by the inhabitants of one of the villages and turned over to the medical personnel of a pontoon bridge unit. After extended treatment and hard training he returned to flying. In presenting new orders, the officer from the personnel division underlined the entry in the pilot's personal file: "Killed in air combat on 22 June 1941" and stated: "Now you can fight to victory. There are no two deaths." The words were prophetic. Danilov did fight to the last days, downing another eight enemy aircraft personally and one in a group.

Between 1000 and 1100 hours on the first day of the war, on the approaches to Grodno, a pilot from the 127th iap, Lt A.I. Pachin, rammed an enemy bomber.⁹ At 1200 hours, the party organizer from the 62d iap, Lt N.G. Kovtun, in the area of the village of Lisyatichi (Lvov Oblast) in aerial combat destroyed a Junkers-88 with a

ram.¹⁰ And after noon, the same feat was carried out by the deputy squadron commander of the 127th iap, Sr Lt P.A. Kuzmin, over Kamenka (Grodno Oblast).¹¹

For heroism and courage shown, a majority of the mentioned pilots was submitted for decorations while Sr Lt I.I. Ivanov was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

In the difficult situation which developed on the front, a ramming was a vivid manifestation of the unbreakable will of the Soviet aviators for victory. Under conditions when many of our fighters were inferior in terms of tactical and technical performance to even the Nazi bombers, often in order to gain the upper hand, it was essential to carry out a feat. For this reason it is no accident that 56 percent (358 out of the 636)¹² aerial rammings of the Great Patriotic War occurred in its most difficult first period. A feeling of responsibility for the destiny of the motherland helped the pilots overcome fear and suppress the instinct of self-preservation. The intrepid fighters made a ramming even over enemy occupied territory, over the sea, without paying attention to the wounds sustained in combat and the damage to the aircraft. Thus, on 14 September 1941, the fighter pilot from the air group of Esel Island (Saaremaa), Jr Lt P.F. Guзов, engaged nine Me-109 over the Baltic. In one of the attacks a piece of shrapnel hit him in the leg and the enemy caught fire. A little time later and a bullet caught him in the arm, but the pilot continued the fight. Five Me-109 left the field of battle while the remainder caught the brave pilot in a "pincer." Bleeding profusely, P.F. Guзов headed his burning fighter into its final attack and broke the enemy ring by the ramming.¹³

A ramming was not an act of desperation and not an accidental collision, as certain foreign specialists assert, but rather a conscious and profoundly thought out step.

What could a pilot do if in a duel with the enemy the ammunition had run out or the gun failed? Formally, he had the right to disengage. But could a true patriot of the motherland allow the air pilot to drop his lethal load on the soldiers clinging to the earth, on the peaceful population of towns and villages and on military installations or riddle a comrade's aircraft with a machine gun burst? Of course not. He carried out his military duty to the end and often at the price of his own life made his contribution to victory.

Our pilots realized perfectly that the bombs dropped from even one aircraft which had broken through could cause numerous victims and destruction while data secured by an air scout could thwart the plans of the Soviet Command. This is why with particular valor they conducted rams in the fighting around Leningrad, Moscow and on the Volga, that is, where the fate of the nation was being determined. Thus, on the approaches to the capital of our motherland, 33 enemy aircraft were destroyed by rammings and one-half of these occurred in the period of the fierce engagement in September-October 1941 (see the diagrams). This was done for the first time on 2 July by the pilot of the 12th iap, Lt S.S.

Goshko.¹⁴ The aviators defending Leningrad employed aerial rams 44 times, including 23 in July 1941, during the days of the bloodiest fighting for the city of Lenin. Some 41 rams were made in the skies of Stalingrad with 13 in September 1942, when the Nazi aviation had air supremacy in this area.

Diagrams for Distribution of Number of Completed Aerial Rammings by Month

Month	Number of Rammings
1941	
22 thru 30 Jun	29
Jul	56
Aug	42
Sep	25
Oct	16
Nov	17
Dec	6
1942	
Jan	11
Feb	11
Mar	5
Apr	13
May	15
Jun	8
Jul	25
Aug	33
Sep	28
Oct	11
from 1 thru 18 Nov	7

a) First period—358 rammings

Month	Number of Rammings
1942	
from 19 thru 30 Nov	1
Dec	9
1943	
Jan	7
Feb	7
Mar	21
Apr	16
May	25
Jun	14
Jul	34
Aug	30
Sep	10
Oct	6
Nov	7
Dec	5

b) Second period—192 rammings

Month	Number of Rammings
1944	
Jan	4
Feb	4
Mar	3
Apr	9
May	5
Jun	8
Jul	10
Aug	8
Sep	5
Oct	3
Nov	-
Dec	3
1945	
Jan	7
Feb	3
Mar	4
Apr	8
May	1
Jun	-
Jul	-
Aug	1

c) Third period and war with Japan—86 rammings

(Compiled by the author from the data of the USSR TsAMO [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], memoir literature and the periodical press.)

The pilots, as a rule, made a ram when the ammunition had run out. For example, in defending Moscow, this was what was done by a flight commander of the 124th iap, Jr Lt B.G. Priozhkov, the pilots of the same regiment, Jr Lts V.I. Dovgiy and N.L. Grunin, and flight commander of the 176th iap, Jr Lt S.V. Achkasov.¹⁵ Often other situations occurred in which it was impossible to delay for a second. The pilot of the 564th iap, Sgt F.A. Krasnopevtsev, and the flight commander of the 445th iap, Lt P.G. Zhidkov, employed this procedure in clouds in order not to lose sight of the enemy.¹⁶ The flight commander of the 176th iap, Sr Lt S.I. Kotorov, flew his aircraft into a Nazi bomber at the moment the latter was coming in to attack an aircraft parking area.¹⁷

The courage of the Soviet aviators knew no bounds. The squadron commissar of the 29th iap, Sr Polit Instr N.M. Dudin, the deputy squadron commander of the 27th Guards iap, Lt A.V. Chirkov, the deputy squadron commander of the 271st iap, Sr Lt S.D. Luganskiy, in following the advice of Chkalov: "When in battle, take the enemy with boldness head-on," intrepidly attacked the Nazi vultures on collision courses and downed them with a ram. The flight commander of the 8th iap, Lt M.M. Osipov, the flight commander of the 152d iap, Lt A.V. Sorokin and the squadron commander of the 721st iap, Maj G.A. Troitskiy, destroyed enemy aircraft by

ramming in low-altitude flight some 15-20 m above the earth. "Where, in what country could such a procedure of attack as a ram arise?" wrote the famous ace and thrice Hero of the Soviet Union A.I. Pokryshkin, subsequently. "Only in our country, among pilots who are totally dedicated to their motherland and who have put its honor, independence and freedom above all else, above their own life."¹⁸

Our aviators boldly engaged the superior enemy forces and emerged victors. For example, the flight commander of the 183d iap, Sr Lt M.D. Baranov, before employing a ram in combat was able to down a bomber and two fighters, the flight commander of the 12th iap, Sr Lt P.T. Tarasov, downed two fighters, the pilot from the 55th iap, Jr Lt D.Ye. Nikitin, got a spotter plane and a fighter, while the pilots of the 402d and 520th iap, Jr Lt A.A. Mamontov and Sr Sgt B.M. Gomolko, each got a bomber.¹⁹ Many brave men perished, particularly in front-on hits on collision courses. Certain were able to bail out of the damaged and uncontrollable aircraft and parachute to safety. But a majority executed the aerial ramming so skillfully that, having destroyed the enemy and escaped with insignificant damage, they safely brought their aircraft to the airfields or made a forced landing in a field. After repairs carried out by their own forces, the rebuilt aviation equipment went back into service.

It is usually considered that a mid-air ramming can be performed only with a fighter. However, scores of examples are known when the given procedure was employed by the crews of ground attack planes and bombers. Aside from the above mentioned A.S. Protasov and T.S. Maliyenko, this was done by the deputy squadron commander of the 135th Short-Range Bomber Air Regiment, Sr Lt Yekaterina Ivanovna Zalenko in a Su-2 bomber, the deputy commander of the 65th shap [ground attack air regiment], Maj M.P. Krasnolutskiy, the deputy squadron commander of the same regiment, Lt V.A. Knizhnik on the Il-2 ground attack plane and many others.

A ramming is a weapon of bold and intrepid fighters. Only a courageous and skillful pilot could destroy an enemy aircraft by hitting it without any particular damage to his own aircraft. Thus, on 8 April 1942, in air combat the flight commander of the 147th iap, Lt A.S. Khlobystov, rammed two air pirates.²⁰ What was this? An example of exceptional valor? Undoubtedly. However, was it possible to do this with the same wing plane and land a virtually uncontrollable fighter without possessing high flight skills? Of course not.

Also indicative is the tenacity with which the Soviet pilots made their rammings. If the first blow was not final, under machine gun and cannon fire they again brought their planes into the attack. An instance is known when the flight commander from the 562d iap, Jr Lt M.A. Rodionov, at a height of 50 m which excluded the possibility of employing a parachute, with his prop

cut off a portion of the wing of a Junkers. The Nazi scout tried to escape, dropping literally down to tree-top level. Then Rodionov with a second hit against the fuselage forced the enemy aircraft to the ground.²¹

To force the enemy down, but for oneself to return to the skies and continue fighting—this was the vital force of the ram.

It is not surprising, having made a ram, our pilots repeatedly won victories. For example, having begun his service on the Western Front and having destroyed a bomber there in September 1941 by a ramming, the deputy squadron commander of the 162d iap, Hero of the Soviet Union, Sr Lt N.A. Kozlov, in May 1942 in the skies over the Volga again employed the given procedure against a Ju-88.²² He ended the war in Berlin, having to his score 620 combat sorties and 23 destroyed pirates. Widely known in the nation are the names of Amet-Khan Sultan, N.D. Gulyayev, V.D. Lavrinenkov, S.D. Luganskiy and P.Ya. Golovachev. These famous aces, twice Heroes of the Soviet Union, downed a total of 185 Nazi aircraft and in the accomplishments of each of them was a ramming.

Loyalty to frontline friendship impelled the air fighters to come to the aid of comrades attacked by the enemy. The highest manifestation of the feeling of military comradeship was demonstrated by the deputy squadron commander for political affairs of the 7th iap, Capt I.D. Odintsov. On 3 July 1941, in the Leningrad skies, he rammed a Nazi fighter and at the price of his own life saved his wingman.²³ The flight commander of the 145th iap, Lt Ye.A. Krivosheyev, in air combat on 9 September 1942, in a situation where a Messerschmitt pilot was preparing to open fire from short range against one of our fighters, turned his aircraft against it. The blow was so strong that the enemy aircraft broke up in the air. Krivosheyev saved his fellow serviceman but himself perished.²⁴ "To destroy the enemy is a great accomplishment but to save a friend is the highest honor"—this admonishment was the main one among the Soviet aviators.

A ramming was a vivid manifestation of patriotism.

Profoundly symbolic is the fact that in the praised Nazi Luftwaffe there was not a single pilot who in a critical moment consciously made an aerial ramming. The Nazi pilots were always guided by the desire to remain alive at whatever the cost. This was best expressed by one of them downed over Lake Ladoga. To the question of why they avoided head-on attacks, Feldvebel Kwak cynically stated: "What am I, a fool? With a head-on attack each of us has the same chances of victory and I would be better off waiting until it would be 90 percent."²⁵

The ram instilled terror in the Nazis. "It was the first time we had encountered Soviet pilots. We were amazed by their courage and intrepidity. We had heard about the ramming but did not believe it could be done," said

at an interrogation Rudolf Luger, the commander of a bomber crew rammed by Jr Lt N.L. Grunin. "Now I am convinced what a terrible thing this is."²⁶ Another said the following: "When the Soviet aircraft caught with the Junkers and crashed into it, I thought that the sky had fallen on me." Those Nazis who were able to bail out and save themselves were forced to admit how far from the truth was their Fuhrer who had asserted that the Russian pilots "understand nothing about aid warfare as this is a weapon of courageous people, a German form of combat."²⁷

There also are no data on the employment of a ram by American and English pilots. Moreover, the Americans themselves concluded that many servicemen during

World War II not only did not show heroism on the battlefield but also demonstrated low moral qualities. In an article "Are Not Americans Cowards?" published in the magazine LIBERTY in 1948, Gen Berder wrote that "ten percent of all the army officer personnel was condemned by field court-martial for refusing to participate in fighting and 4,000 officers refused to fight by wounding themselves. As a result," he concluded, "if we add up all these 'cowards,' 'psychos,' 'parasites' and those who 'don't give a damn,' then according to the most cautious estimates, it must be recognized that at least 4 million actually healthy Americans of induction age were incapable or not desirous of fighting for their motherland."²⁸

Table 1*

Air Arm	I	II	Period III	War With Japan**	Total Over War
Fighter	335	186	77	1	599
Bomber	14	1	3	—	18
Ground Attack	9	5	5	—	19
Total	358	192	85	1	636

* The tables were compiled by the author from the data of the TsAMO, memoir literature and the periodical press.

** In August 1945, the pilot from the 22d iap of the Pacific Fleet Air Forces, Lt A.Ye. Goltvenko, by a ramming destroyed a Japanese fighter and then parachuted to the ground.

Table 2

Position Held	I	II	Period III	War With Japan	Total Over War
Dep Cmdr Air Army	1	—	—	—	1
Asst Cmdr Air Corps,					
Dep Cmdr Air Div	1	—	1	—	2
Cmdr, Com Air Reg	9	2	2	—	13
Dep Cmdr Air Reg	8	6	3	—	17
Cmdr, Com Air Squad	41	26	15	—	82
Dep Cmdr Air Squad	52	23	9	—	84
Flt Cmdr	97	37	23	—	157
Pilot	149	98	32	1	280

Table 3

Air Arm	I	II	Period III	War With Japan	Total Over War
Col	1	—	—	—	1
Lt Col	1	1	3	—	5
Maj	7	6	6	—	19
Btln Commissar	6	—	—	—	6
Capt	36	23	14	—	73
Sr Polit Instr	5	—	—	—	5
Sr Lt	66	40	18	—	124

Table 3

Air Arm	I	II	Period III	War With Japan	Total Over War
Lt	99	39	18	1	157
Polit Instr	1	—	—	—	1
Jr Lt	95	63	26	—	184
Master Sgt	9	1	—	—	10
Sr Sgt	12	7	—	—	19
Sgt	20	12	—	—	32

Table 4

Air Arm	Type of Aircraft	I	II	Period III	War With Japan	Total Over War
German	Ju-87	4	11	2	—	17
	Ju-88	64	25	9	—	98
	He-111	27	18	5	—	50
	Do-217	7	1	—	—	8
	Unknown	68	28	3	—	99
Fighter	Me-109	58	28	10	—	96
	Me-110	8	3	—	—	11
	FW-190	4	19	25	—	48
	Type unknown	92	46	19	1	158
Reconnaissance	FW-189	15	9	4	—	28
	Hs-126	9	2	1	—	12
	Unknown	1	1	6	—	8
Transport	Ju-52	1	1	1	—	3

During the war years in the Soviet Air Forces, a ramming was carried out by 561 fighter pilots (including 33 who did this twice, Hero of the Soviet Union Lt A.S. Khlobystov, who did it three times and Hero of the Soviet Union Lt B.I. Kovzan four times), 19 ground attack crews and 18 bombers (Table 1). Among these brave men were persons who held positions from a regular pilot to the deputy commander of an air army (Table 2) and who had military ranks from sergeant to colonel (Table 3). Of this number, 233 safely landed their damaged aircraft, 176 bailed out, 216 were killed and 11 were missing in action.²⁹ Here the enemy lost 272 bombers, 313 fighters, 48 reconnaissance aircraft and 3 transport aircraft (Table 4). Considering the size of the crews (one or two men in a fighter and two-four men in the remainder), enemy aviation lost over 1,500 flight personnel.³⁰

In the course of the war, our aviation units began to receive an ever-increasing amount of new equipment. The pilots grew stronger in fighting, they gained great combat experience and constantly improved their techniques of air combat. The Soviet Air Forces won strategic and operational air supremacy. The most experienced enemy flight personnel was killed in the fierce

fighting. The morale of the Luftwaffe personnel was thoroughly sapped. The Nazi pilots avoided one-on-one fighting and accepted combat only when they had a multiple numerical superiority. Under the altered conditions, our fighters destroyed the enemy predominantly by firing the aircraft weapons and more and more rarely resorted to a ramming. On this question the commander of the Air Forces even signed a corresponding order on 23 September 1944 and the military council issued the following instructions: "To explain to all the flight personnel of the Red Army Air Forces that our fighters have outstanding, powerful modern weapons and in flight performance surpass all existing types of German fighters.... The use of the 'ram' in air combat against enemy aircraft which have poorer flight qualities is ill-advised and for this reason the 'ram' must be employed only in exceptional cases, as an extreme measure."³¹

The aerial ramming—a procedure involving fatal risk. However, Soviet aviators employed it 636 times! Why?

What drives of the soul were the cause of this? Why, even in the skies over Berlin, did the Nazi pilots who did not lack bravery and skill never employ a ramming? The

party inspired our air fighters to heroic actions. Some had joined the party in peacetime and others during the terrible days of the war. Among those who made an aerial ramming, 63 percent were communists and 34 percent were Komsomol members.³² The gratitude of the Soviet people to these pilots has been expressed in an awarding of the majority of them with orders and the Gold Star of a Hero of the Soviet Union with the naming of streets, squares and schools after them, with the building of monuments, the setting up of memorial plaques and so forth. They were different people but they were all totally dedicated to the motherland. Each made his feat in his own way and merits having the nation know of this and be proud of it.

Footnotes

1. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 33, inv. 793756, file 17, sheets 108, 109; inv. 682523, file 8, sheet 33.
2. Ibid., folio 124 iap, inv. 621169, file 1, sheet 4.
3. Ibid., folio 21 sad, inv. 1, file 10, sheets 3, 17; folio 228, inv. 31665, file 1, sheets 35, 38; personal file of L.G. Butelin No 88007; folio 33 iap, inv. 200512, file 1, sheet 7; S.S. Smirnov, "Rasskazy o neizvestnykh geroyakh" [Tales About Unknown Heroes], Moscow, Molodaya Gvardiya, 1964, p 52.
4. N.S. Skripko, "Po tselyam blizhnim i dalnim" [At Near and Far Targets], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1981, p 128; PARTIYNAYA ZHIZN, No 8, 1970, p 66; TsAMO, folio 11 sad, inv. 2, file 6, sheet 3.
5. TsAMO, folio 126 iap, inv. 420584, file 1, sheets 3, 4.
6. Ibid., folio 123 iap, inv. 143559, file 2, sheet 2.
7. KRYLYA RODINY, No 9, 1963, p 24.
8. KRASNAYA ZVEZDA, 9 July 1941.
9. IZVESTIYA, 22 June 1985.
10. KRYLYA RODINY, No 6, 1976, p 19; MOLODOY KOMMUNIST, No 6, 1981, p 12.
11. TsAMO, folio 127 iap, inv. 637502, file 5, sheets 3, 4.
12. Estimated by the author.
13. TsVMA [Central Naval Archives], folio 88, inv. 9286, file 98, sheet 111.
14. TsAMO, personal file of S.S. Goshko, No 498799.
15. Ibid., folio 124 iap, inv. 621169, file 1, sheet 7, 81; folio 33, inv. 793756, file 3, sheets 346-348.
16. Ibid., folio 6 iak, inv. 56229, file 5, sheet 63; folio 445 iap, inv. 201485, file 2, sheet 9.
17. Ibid., folio 6 iak, inv. 407314, file 3, sheet 23.
18. F.A. Vashin, "Vozdusnyy taran" [Aerial Ramming], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1962, p 6.
19. TsAMO, folio 33, inv. 11302, file 106, sheet 27; folio 319, inv. 4818, file 34, sheet 90, 91; folio 402 iap, inv. 211081, file 1, sheet 6; folio 368, inv. 19809, file 2, sheet 142.
20. Ibid., folio 32, inv. 11318, file 42, sheets 291, 352; folio 35, inv. 3084, file 6, sheets 264-266.
21. Ibid., folio 562 iad, inv. 523693, file 1, sheet 9.
22. Ibid., folio 102 iad, inv. 601855, file 2, sheet 62; inv. 243937, file 7, sheets 80, 81; folio 20014, inv. 1, file 2, sheet 62.
23. Ibid., folio 14 gv iap, inv. 143421, file 1, sheet 89.
24. Ibid., folio 145 iap, inv. 143443, file 1, sheets 52-57.
25. V.F. Golubev, "Krylya krepnut v boyu" [Wings Are Strengthened in Combat], Leningrad, Lenizdat, 1984, p 132.
26. STALINSKIY SOKOL, 29 October 1941.
27. "Taran" [Ramming], Moscow, Sovetskiy Pisatel, 1941, p 3.
28. A.D. Dyachenko, "V ognennom nebe Kubani" [In the Fiery Skies of the Kuban], Krasnodar, Krasnodarskoye Kn. Izd-vo, 1984, p 135.
29. Estimated by author.
30. Estimated by author.
31. TsAMO, folio 35, inv. 11250, file 100, sheet 152.
32. Estimated by author.

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Mikoyan on WWII Evacuation Operations

00010009d VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL
in Russian No 3, Mar 89 (signed to press 28 Feb 89)
pp 31-38

[Article, published under the heading "From Unpublished Manuscripts," by A.I. Mikoyan, Hero of Socialist Labor: "On the Evacuation Council"]

[Text] Two days after the start of the war, when the reality of the enemy's capture of a number of our cities became indisputable in line with the setbacks on the

front, the question arose of the need to direct evacuation from the frontline zone. The idea of organizing a body with such functions had never occurred previously for us. Encountering this at the outset of the war, the Politburo felt that the People's Commissariat of Railroads [NKPS] should play the main role in evacuation questions.

The Decree of the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)] Central Committee and the USSR SNK [Council of People's Commissars] of 24 June 1941 established the Evacuation Council with a membership of L.M. Kaganovich (chairman), A.N. Kosygin, N.M. Shvernik (deputy chairman), B.M. Shaposhnikov (General Staff), S.N. Kruglov (NKVD [People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs]), P.S. Popkov (Lengorispolkom [Leningrad City Executive Committee]), N.F. Dubrovin (NKPS) and P.I. Kirpichnikov (USSR Gosplan) and it immediately set to work.

However, the situation did not develop as assumed and even 2 days later it was clear that evacuation would assume an enormous scale. It was impossible to evacuate everything all at once. There was neither the time nor the transport. It was essential literally along the way to choose what should be evacuated first in the interests of the state. It was also essential to effectively decide to what regions of the nation the various plants and enterprises should be evacuated. On the following day, I was summoned by I.V. Stalin and he proposed that I temporarily take up this important matter and become the first deputy chairman of the Evacuation Council. On 26 June 1941, I was appointed to this position.

I had to devote a great deal of energy to resolving the evacuation questions as, in essence, Stalin had placed the entire responsibility on me. Each evening I met with him and informed him on the state of affairs.

At the end of June 1941, upon my instructions, the people's commissars of agriculture I.Ya. Benediktov, the meat and dairy industry P.V. Smirnov, and the food industry V.P. Zotov and the deputy people's commissar of sovkhozes Krylov prepared a draft decree of the GKO [State Defense Committee] "On the Evacuation From Frontline Areas of Livestock, Grain and Fodder Belonging to the Kolkhozes as Well as to the Sovkhozes and Other State Organizations and the Property of the MTS [Machine-Tractor Station] and Sovkhozes." The draft was approved by I.Ya. Vyshinskiy (the legal commission), N.M. Shvernik (AUCCTU) and A.A. Andreyev. Only after this was the decree approved by the GKO. It obliged the SNK of the Ukraine, Belorussia and Moldavia, the oblispolkoms of Leningrad, Kalinin, Smolensk and Orel Oblasts within a 10-day period to evacuate livestock and grain fodder. Places were indicated where the livestock and equipment should be moved. The rules and order of evacuation were approved.

On the 4th day of my activity on the Evacuation Council, it was made responsible for approving the dates submitted by the people's commissariats for their evacuation from Moscow to other cities in the East. The plan first of all was to evacuate approximately one-half of the personnel of the people's commissariats with two or three deputies. After the evacuated portion of the people's commissariat had begun to function normally at the new place, the remaining portion of it was to be moved headed by the people's commissar. One of the deputy people's commissars was to remain in Moscow as the agent along with a small group of workers for carrying out the assignments of the people's commissar and maintaining contact with the governmental institutions. Initially a decision was taken to completely evacuate 21 people's commissariats and partially 23, but by the end of the first 10 days of July 1941, their number had been increased, respectively, by 10 and 20.

The Evacuation Council, having examined the dates submitted by the people's commissariats for their evacuation, drew up a plan for moving the people's commissariats from Moscow to other cities in the nation and also a schedule for their departure. There were plans to fully evacuate 14 people's commissariats and partially 30 of them and this was approved on 16 July 1941 by a decree of the USSR SNK.

During the first 2 weeks of the war, many families and workers of white collar personnel from the Moscow enterprises were evacuated from Moscow to the East. On 6 July 1941, the Evacuation Council adopted a decree permitting the Mosgorispolkom [Moscow City Executive Committee] to evacuate an additional 532,000 members of worker and employee families. This was done both in the interests of their security as well as in the aims of a certain easing of food supply for the multimillion population of the capital.

The question of evacuating children left without their parents from Moscow assumed particular urgency. For this special boarding schools were established and these were later evacuated. On 10 September, the GKO permitted the Mosgorispolkom to organize another 500-600 such boarding schools in addition to those previously organized and evacuated and evacuate them to Perm, Chelyabinsk and Gorkiy Oblasts and to the Volga regions.

It must be pointed out that the evacuation and relocation of the productive forces from the threatened areas of the nation to the East was a compulsory measure brought about by the extremely unfavorable situation on the front. This was carried out according to a unified plan on a colossal scale. The task posed by the party was in the shortest period of time to remove a significant number of enterprises together with the worker collectives from an enormous territory and move them to a new region and put them into production. The leaders of the VKP(b) Central Committee and the GKO were directly concerned with this most important measure.

The situation on the front continued to grow worse. The evacuation volume increased. Even in July 1941 it became clear that L.M. Kaganovich, being over-loaded with transport matters, could not provide dependable work of the Evacuation Council. Considering this, the Evacuation Council on 16 July 1941 was reorganized by a GKO decision. N.M. Shvernik was appointed its chairman while A.N. Kosygin and M.G. Pervukhin were the deputies. This time Stalin left me on the council as a member. Both prior to the reorganization as well as after it, the council carried out its work in close contact with the local party and soviet bodies in those areas where a situation arose requiring evacuation and particularly in those where the evacuees and equipment were to be delivered.

The questions of evacuating the civilian population from the frontline zone assumed particular importance and particular difficulty. Under the Evacuation Council a special administration was established for evacuating the population and this was headed by the deputy chairman of the RSFSR SNK, K.D. Pamfilov. In mid-July 1941, some 10 million rubles were allocated from the Union budget for providing aid to the population being evacuated.

In the autumn of 1941, the situation on the front became particularly difficult. The Nazi troops had reached the outskirts of Moscow. During this time on the move from Siberia and the Urals were several fully equipped and well-trained divisions. According to the traffic schedule, the first trains with these troops could arrive only after several days and the entire mass of troops after a month. The command at Moscow had not significant reserves. We also did not know what reserves the enemy had and how close they were and whether the enemy would be able to shift them to the front to break through to Moscow. The fate of the capital, in essence, depended upon whose reserves arrived first.

The situation on the front became so taut that on 8 October 1941, the GKO set up a special commission to carry out special measures in Moscow and the oblast in order, in the event the Germans broke through to Moscow, to destroy enterprises which the Nazis could employ for military purposes. The commission included: the Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs A.I. Serov, the Chief of the Moscow NKVD Administration M.I. Zhuravlev, the Secretary of the Moscow Party Gorkom G.M. Popov, the Secretary of the Moscow Party Obkom B.N. Chernousov and the Chief of the Red Army Military Engineer Directorate L.Z. Kotlyar. For these purposes in the rayons of Moscow and the oblast they organized troykas [three-man teams] consisting of the first secretaries of the raykoms (leaders), the chiefs of the rayon NKVD sections and representatives of the Soviet Army engineer units, while at the enterprises they formed special groups of tried, reliable workers. The question of evacuating the Moscow enterprises was discussed specifically in the morning of 15 October.

Usually we worked until 0500-0600 hours in the morning. From the viewpoint of wartime, this was convenient because by evening all information had been collected from the front commanders and the General Staff. We arrived at work at 1000 hours in the morning and Stalin arrived somewhat later, around 1200 hours.

At 0800 hours in the morning of 15 October, I was awakened by security and informed that Stalin was requesting my presence in his office at 0900 hours. At that time meeting in his office were members of both the GKO and the Politburo. At the designated time everyone summoned had assembled. As I remember, present were V.M. Molotov, G.M. Malenkov, N.A. Voznesenskiy, A.S. Shcherbakov, L.M. Kaganovich and others. Stalin appeared calm. He briefly set out the situation having emphasized that before our troops could arrive the Germans would be able to bring up their reserves sooner and the front at Moscow could be breached; he proposed immediate, that very day, evacuation of the government and the most important institutions and prominent political and state leaders; he described the necessity of readying the city in the event of the breaching of the front and an invasion by the Nazis into Moscow; he gave instructions to mine the most important equipment following a list submitted by the special commission. The Commander of the Moscow Military District, Gen P.A. Artemyev, was ordered to prepare a plan for the defense of the city, having the task of holding it until the approach of the main reserves from Siberia. The government, Stalin emphasized, must be moved to Kuybyshev. The foreign embassies had to be evacuated there while the people's commissariats would be moved to other cities where they had already been partially evacuated. Then he recommended that V.M. Molotov and I immediately summon all the people's commissars and inform them that in line with the arising situation, it was essentially immediately, within 24 hours, to completely organize the evacuation of the people's commissariats.

We agreed with Stalin's proposal. The situation demanded the adopting of the most immediate measures. Right then the GKO Decree "On Evacuating the Capital of the USSR, the City of Moscow" was adopted. Due to the bad situation in the area of the Moshaysk Defensive Line, it was planned that the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet and the government be evacuated that day (15 October). In the event that enemy troops appeared by the gates of Moscow, the designated enterprises, warehouses and institutions were to be blown up if these could not be evacuated as well as all the electrical equipment of the subway, with the exception of the water system and sewer system.

In coming out of the office, I went into the room of A.N. Poskrebyshchev, Stalin's secretary, and from here phoned the business manager of the USSR SNK, Ya.Ye. Chadayev, and asked him to inform the people's commissars that they must immediately report to the SNK on the given question. According to our estimates, they should be on the spot in 15 minutes.

I.V. Stalin proposed that all the Politburo and GKO members leave Moscow on that very day.

"I," he said, "will leave tomorrow morning."

With my impulsiveness I asked Stalin: "Why do we leave today and you can leave tomorrow? We can also leave tomorrow. For example, the leaders of the Moscow Party Committee and the NKVD should be the last to leave the city." Then I added: "I don't have time to leave today and I will remain here and leave with you tomorrow."

The others fell silent. Generally the raising of this question was so unexpected that it did not cause any dispute. Stalin did not argue against such a partial change in the plan and then proposed:

"Let us give some thought on how to better prepare the city in the event of a breakthrough by the Nazis."

Several minutes later, V.I. Molotov and I met with the people's commissars. Vyacheslav Mikhaylovich [Molotov] explained the situation. The people's commissars were literally dumbfounded by the very fact of their evacuation as well as by the fact that this should be carried out in a single day. The People's Commissar of Ferrous Metallurgy, I.F. Tevosyan stood up and with his Caucasian spirit stated that he would not be evacuated. He clearly could not admit the idea that the Soviet Army might lose Moscow and for this reason was convinced that there must be no evacuation and everyone must remain in place. It seemed wrong to him that the government would leave Moscow and this must not be done.

I was on closer terms with Ivan Fedorovich [Tevosyan] than with the others and had known him even in the Baku underground, when with the English occupation he headed the Baku party organization. I stopped him and said that he did not know everything and it was not up to him to settle the question. It would be better to give some thought on how to organize the departure of the people's commissariat headed by him from Moscow.

We also gave some thought to the question of how to more quickly accommodate the people's commissariats on the spot and begin work. The NKPS was ordered to support the evacuation by providing rolling stock. It was decided to give the workers at the plants a 2-week advance in pay while the factory-plant youth and students at the technical schools would be evacuated to the east in the morning on foot. A plan was drawn up stating which of them would be sent where.

I recalled a conversation with L.M. Kaganovich. When we were going down in the elevator together, he said a sentence which simply took me aback:

"Listen, when you leave tonight, please tell me so I am not caught here."

I replied: "What are you saying? I have already said that I will not leave tonight. We will leave tomorrow with Stalin and you will leave with your people's commissariat."

Several hours later, I went into Stalin's office. Gen Artemyev was there. On the desk lay a map of the western part of Moscow, up to the Borodino Bridge across the Moskva River. On it were marked the first and second defensive lines as well as the possible German positions during the fighting for the city. Artemyev with a pointer showed Stalin the defensive lines and explained how, in the event of necessity, our troops would pull back toward Moscow, how a circular defense of the capital had been organized and how much time they could hold out at each of the lines.

At the Evacuation Council we were constantly verifying the course of carrying out the decision. Kaganovich who had compiled the plan for the departure of the people's commissariats, phoned literally every hour reporting how the evacuation process was going on. Everything was organized very quickly and everything went normally.

On the same day, the Politburo instructed the secretary of the VKP(b) Central Committee, A.S. Shcherbakov, for each Moscow rayon to assign from the party workers those who would remain in the underground as party organizers in the event of the possible taking of the city by the Germans. Under the pretext of an emergency evacuation, they were to announce their immediate departure but in fact assume an illegal status, establish an address and contacts, in a word, go underground. And this was done.

I slept for several hours. At around 1000 hours, I decided to make a trip by car through Moscow and drive out to the Motor Vehicle Plant imeni I.V. Stalin which was to be mined. The plant director I.A. Likhachev and his deputy V.I. Krestyaninov had phoned me the evening before and stated that the Gosbank had refused to fully issue the money to pay the advance to the workers and asked me to intervene. I immediately phoned the Gosbank and ordered the immediate issuing of the money. They replied that they were running low on cash but they of course would carry out the decision of the USSR SNK.

In driving up to the plant I could see that there were crowds of workers standing around the factory gates. It seemed an unorganized meeting was going on. At the very entrance to the plant's territory stood Likhachev and next to him Krestyaninov and both were having words. I asked what was going on and why so many people had assembled. Likhachev replied that the workers wanted to go into the shops to work but he could not allow that as the plant had been mined.

The workers recognized me. Someone came forward and asked why they were not allowed into the plant. I could hear shouts:

"What is going on in Moscow?"

"Why has the government fled?"

"Where is the secretary of the plant party committee and the secretary of the Komsomol committee?"

"Why has no one explained anything?"

"Why are we not allowed into the plant?"

I heard them out calmly and then said:

"Comrades, why are you angry? There is a war on. Anything can happen. Who said that the government had fled from Moscow? Those are provocation rumors. The government has not left. Whoever needs to be in Moscow will be here. Stalin is in Moscow and everyone who must be here is in the capital. The people's commissariats have left because they have nothing to do in Moscow when the front is approaching the city walls. They should manage industry and the national economy. It is better to do this not from a frontline city. We can merely be blamed for not having done this sooner. Now this is being done in a completely thought-out manner, upon instructions of the party Central Committee, the GKO and the SNK. Why all this noise?" I asked. "Have you not been issued your pay for 2 weeks in advance? Now you must show complete calmness and unswerving obedience to the orders of the authorities and great organization. I request that you leave for your homes and not attack the director, he has not made this decision but is merely carrying out the government's instructions."

Gradually the workers calmed down and began to leave. Later, when we went into the shop, I began asking Likhachev how things were going at the plant. He informed me that reliable communist comrades had been left by the machine tools. They had been well instructed and if orders came, the machine tools would be blown up. I could see these comrades: strict, organized, without any sign of panic, although the situation was extremely tense. The city's population as a whole behaved calmly.

At that time my family was living at a dacha. Two sons were in the army. Even before the war the elder had been admitted to a military aviation school while the other gave up school and at the beginning of the war, with my approval, joined the army. Three school children and my wife remained. The security directorate informed me that my family was among the evacuees to leave on the train of the TsIK [Central Executive Committee], where M.I. Kalinin, G.M. Dimitrov (Comintern) and comrades from the Central Committee would be traveling. The train would leave at 1900 hours in the evening. Immediately, as it was around 1700 hours in the evening, I phoned my wife and said that she was to collect the kids and in an hour a car would come and they would travel to Kuybyshev. My wife was literally stunned: how, where why? I replied that I would explain later but now it was

essential to collect oneself immediately. She asked what things she could take. I replied that she should take clothes for the children and herself and the least possible. My wife did all of this. It didn't even enter my mind to see them off as at that time each minute was precious for work.

Later all the Politburo members reassembled to learn how the evacuation was going. Everything was being carried out as planned and most importantly there was no new, particularly alarming reports from the front. Intelligence did not report any movements by German troops around Moscow. And of course, we did not leave that day. And generally speaking the idea of the departure of a narrow group of leaders was abandoned. All the remainder: A.A. Andreyev, N.A. Voznesenskiy, L.M. Kaganovich and M.I. Kalinin, left for Kuybyshev.

The situation on the front began to stabilize around Moscow as well. New troop formations from Siberia were approaching the capital and this reduced the danger of a possible German breakthrough. On 20 October 1941, the list of enterprises to be destroyed in the event of a breakthrough of the Nazi troops to Moscow was revised and reduced to 335 (instead of 1,119), including 224 in the city and 111 in the oblast.

Stalin proposed that Molotov go to Kuybyshev, spend some time there, and see how Voznesenskiy was managing, how the SNK had settled in and was working. Molotov agreed but added:

"Let Mikoyan come with me."

I broke in:

"What am I, some sort of tail? Here I have telephone contact with all the oblasts. The people's commissariats which are evacuated have better telephone contact with Moscow than they do with Kuybyshev. I have a lot of work, I am receiving information and am carrying out everything needed. In several days a small group of workers from the People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade will return to Moscow from Ulyanovsk. Through this group I can maintain contact with Ulyanovsk and direct foreign trade."

Stalin, having decided to support Molotov said:

"Why don't you go?"

I again burst out, but it was impossible to resist anymore. This was Molotov's doing and agreeing tacitly, we left.

In Kuybyshev there was a session of the SNK and I became familiar with the work of the people's commissariats which were there and under my control¹ and by telephone I reached the people's commissars who were located in other cities.

In the same house as my family (it then occupied one of the rooms on the second floor of a two-story house), Mikhail Ivanovich Kalinin was living on the first floor. I went to see him and described the situation on the fronts which still remained extremely difficult. I was struck by his exceptional calmness and the depth of his thoughts in assessing events. He did not start with those questions which I expected: "Why have we retreated back so far?" "Why have not all measures been taken to stop the offensive of the Nazi troops?" but very calmly began speaking about not being excessively concerned over the very tense military situation which was arising them.

"It is essential to have a good knowledge of the nature of the Russian man," he said. "All these temporary defeats cannot undermine and will not undermine the spirit of our people. Just look now, having felt the fatal danger and having girded their loins, the Russian people will undoubtedly beat all of those who encroached on their liberty and independence. Now they cannot be stopped. And all of the peoples of the Soviet nation will be together with the Russian people."

Three or four days later, Stalin summoned V.M. Molotov and myself back to Moscow. When we returned, in a meeting on the same day he raised the question of removing from the frontline rayons the supplies of food and raw materials and proposed in parallel with the Evacuation Council to set up a special committee to evacuate from the frontline zone into the interior of the nation the food supplies, supplies of manufactured goods, textile and leather equipment and raw materials, equipment for footwear, garment and tobacco mills and soap works, as well as refrigerators, tobacco raw materials and Russian tobacco, soap and soda. Upon Stalin's proposal, on 25 October I was appointed the chairman of the committee. The committee members were: A.N. Kosygin, L.V. Smirnov, V.P. Zotov and Z.A. Shashkov. The committee carried out its functions up to 19 December 1941. In line with the changing situation on the front, it was eliminated but its personnel was turned over to the newly organized Committee for relieving the railroads.

By mid-December 1941, the situation on the front around Moscow had stabilized. The Secretary of the VKP(b) Central Committee, A.A. Andreyev, and the personnel of the party Central Committee were permitted to begin reevacuation from Kuybyshev to Moscow. It was to be completed by 25 December. The USSR SNK continued to remain in Kuybyshev. On 19 December 1941, N.A. Voznesenskiy sent a letter to Stalin in which he asked that the VKP(b) Central Committee take a decision to return the government to Moscow. I recall that Stalin wrote on this letter: "To Comrade Voznesenskiy. You may have to wait a bit. It is still too early." He underlined the words "too early."

The success of the evacuation had depended largely upon the precise operation of rail transport. The dimensions of the evacuation were enormous. In mid-December

1941, an unusually large number of trains with evacuated equipment and other freight had become stuck on the railroads. There were not enough empty railroad cars. The situation on the railroads was extremely complex.

The NKPS was unable to cut through this difficult knot. The people's commissariats were in no hurry to unload the trains with arriving equipment and materials, as production areas had not been prepared as yet for the arriving equipment and there were not enough warehouses. Proceeding from their own narrow departmental interests, they actually turned the trains into rolling warehouses.

On 25 December 1941, the special Committee for Unloading Transit Freight was organized. Given the necessary powers, it was obliged to effectively settle questions of unloading and forwarding freight stuck on the railroads. I was appointed the chairman of the committee while its members were A.N. Kosygin, N.A. Voznesenskiy and A.V. Khrulev.

In order to resolve all the questions without delay and red tape, considering the situation, we distributed groups of people's commissars between the committee members. It was established that each of us, having our own data from the NKPS on the availability of freight from the appropriate people's commissariats on the railroads, would summon their representatives and prepare for approval by the committee specific proposals to unload various stuck freight. Proposals were considered adopted after voice voting.

The data submitted by the NKPS showed that intervention by the committee was needed not on all railroads but basically those where the worst situation had arisen. It was decided to work with the Northern, Gorkiy, Ryazan-Urals, Stalingrad, Penza, Yaroslavl, Southeastern and Lenin Railroads. At the very first session held on 26 December, the committee assigned the NKPS to carry out a new census of stuck freight within a 24-hour period for one group of railroads and within 2 days for the rest, since the data submitted by the people's commissariat were out of date. At the next session we decided to hear a report by the Deputy Chairman of the USSR SNK M.Z. Saburov on discovering and planning new freight traffic over the railroads of the Urals and Volga into the areas where the evacuated industry was to be located.

The committee also discussed the report of the Deputy People's Commissar for the Railroads, N.F. Dubrovin, on the state of affairs on the railroads of the largest Moscow Railroad Junction. For examining the question of relieving the Moscow Junction, the Lenin Railroad and the railroads of the Urals and Volga, along with the committee members the Deputy Chairman of the USSR SNK, V.A. Malyshev and M.Z. Saburov, were to be involved in the work of the commission. Naturally, the People's Commissar of the Railroads L.M. Kaganovich also participated in the committee's work.

Many transit trains carrying coal, oil and mazut had become stuck en route as a result of the fact that the railroads could not handle them. This was also the case for the fuel trains for recipients which had already been evacuated. The question of supplying the enterprises with coal was very acute. For this reason the committee adopted a decision to unload the loop route trains loaded with coal at the nearest rail junctions. According to the proposal of the NKPS, some 10,200 cars with coal were quickly unloaded at the Omsk, Southern Urals, Perm and Tomsk Railroads.

The coal was dispatched to the closest plants to the railroad, to the depots of the Directorate of State Material Reserves (UGMR), the storage areas of the power plants and rail stations. All unloaded coal was entered in the supplies of the UGMR, and the freed cars were sent back to be reloaded with coal. The NKPS and the Narkomugol [People's Commissariat of Coal Industry] promised to provide the immediate dispatch of coal destined to enterprises when the coal was to be unloaded in accord with the committee's decision. The committee obliged the Narkomugol within a 24-hour period to submit for approval by the appropriate people's commissariats proposals on measures to aid the most important enterprises where a difficult fuel situation might arise.

On 1 January 1942, in line with the complaint from the People's Commissar of Ferrous Metallurgy, I.F. Tervoyan, the committee instructed the Deputy People's Commissar of Railroads, N.F. Dubrovin, to quickly review the question of moving the trains carrying coal, particularly coking coal, to the enterprises of the Narkomchermet [People's Commissariat of Ferrous Metallurgy]. By this same committee decision, the Narkomugol (Kurmashhev) was obliged no later than 2 January 1942 to submit proposals on supplying coal to enterprises primarily of the Narkomchermet, Narkomelektrostantsiy [People's Commissariat of Power Plants] and the people's commissariats of the defense industry.

The committee planned to employ the local population in unloading work, to make maximum use of all the materials handling equipment available to the NKPS and the people's commissariats, and to hold liable the leaders of enterprises for the delayed unloading of cars at the railroad stations. The NKPS was obliged each day to submit to the Committee for Unloading Transit Freight information on the course of unloading following the decisions of the committee adopted individually for each industrial people's commissariat and for each railroad.

Of course, there was also stuck freight of the military department and this was usually caused by changes in the situation on the front. The committee member and Deputy People's Commissar of Defense and Chief of the Red Army Rear Services, A.V. Kulyev, quickly straightened out the situation with this freight.

Regardless of the difficulties, the Committee for Unloading Transit Freight in less than 10 days adopted measures which made it possible to break the log-jam in rail transport. Having carried out the task assigned to it, it ceased its existence.

In line with the defeat at Kharkov, the situation on the front in June 1942 again became difficult. Again the question arose of evacuation. On 22 June, under the GKO, they organized an Evacuation Commission headed by N.M. Shvernik. I was included as a member. As they say, we had to get busy. Also members of the commission were A.N. Kosygin, M.Z. Saburov, B.N. Arutyunov (NKPS), P.A. Yermolin (deputy chief of the Red Army Rear Services) and others.

The scale of evacuation was enormous. Over the entire period of the war, some 2,593 enterprises were relocated completely or partially just by rail. Prior to the war these produced 33 percent of all the nation's industrial product. Over 10 million persons were evacuated to the eastern regions and around 11,000 tractors, a large amount of livestock and the property of many kolkhozes, sovkhozes and MTS. In essence, an entire industrial nation was moved thousands of kilometers and this ensured the fastest fundamental restructuring of the national economy to a wartime footing.

Footnote

1. As the deputy chairman of the USSR SNK, I supervised the work of seven Union people's commissariats (trade, procurement, the fishing as well as food, meat-dairy industries, maritime and river fleet) and the Main Directorate of the Sevmorput [Northern Seaway]. Moreover, as a second job, I was the people's commissar of foreign trade and directed the receiving of Lend Lease shipments from the United States.

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Thirties Military Purges Examined

00010009e VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL
in Russian No 3, Mar 89 (signed to press 28 Feb 89)
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[Article, published under the heading "Military Discipline: Lessons of History" by Col O.F. Suvenirov, doctor of historical sciences: "An Army-Wide Tragedy"; this article is a continuation. For the start, see this journal, No 2, 1989]

[Text] In implementing the course of the party and government of maintaining and strengthening Soviet military discipline in every possible way a crucial role was played by the command-supervisory personnel of the RKKA [Worker-Peasant Red Army] and RKKF [Worker-Peasant Red Navy] as a whole but primarily by the command personnel. It is generally known how complicated and difficult it was for the young Soviet

state to quickly resolve the problem of training command personnel capable of and desirous of leading the army in a socialist manner. In giving this problem statewide priority significance and having set up an extensive network of military schools, academies and courses for the training and advanced training of commanders from the workers, and in patiently indoctrinating the former military specialists in a socialist spirit, the Communist Party and the Soviet government was unable to surmount incredible difficulties and in a few years produce remarkable personnel of Red commanders.

Soviet power had done everything to increase their authority. By the decree of the USSR TsIK [Central Executive Committee] and SNK [Council of People's Commissars] of 22 September 1935, the highest military rank was established in the RKKA, marshal of the Soviet Union. Personal military ranks were also introduced for persons of the command and supervisory personnel of the Ground Forces and Air Forces of the Red Army (from lieutenant to army commander first rank), and in the Navy military ranks were introduced on 30 December 1936 (from lieutenant to fleet flag officer first rank). In December 1935, the USSR SNK adopted a decree on the uniform and insignias for the command, supervisory and rank-and-file personnel of the ground, air and naval forces of the RKKA, and in 1936, the order of the NKO [people's commissar of defense] was issued on establishing loop insignias (emblems) for the RKKA personnel. From November 1935, personal military ranks began to be awarded. The first marshals of the Soviet Union were V.K. Blyukher, S.M. Budennyi, K.Ye. Voroshilov, A.I. Yegorov and M.N. Tukhachevskiy; army commanders first rank were I.P. Belov, S.S. Kamenev, I.P. Uborevich, B.M. Shaposhnikov, I.E. Yakir; army commanders second rank were Ya.I. Alksnis, I.I. Vatsetis, I.N. Dubovoy, P.Ye. Dybenko, N.D. Kashirin, A.I. Kork, M.K. Levandovskiy, A.I. Sedyakin, I.F. Fedko, I.A. Khalepskiy; fleet flag officers first rank were M.V. Viktorov and V.M. Orlov. In 1936, serving in the ranks of the RKKA were 62 corps commanders, 201 divisional commanders, 474 brigade commanders, 1,713 colonels, 5,501 majors, 14,369 captains, 26,082 senior lieutenants and 58,582 lieutenants.¹

The military leaders who had been tempered in the crucible of the Civil War and the commanders trained in peacetime were capable of successfully resolving any complex questions in ensuring the proper level of Soviet military discipline. They worked hard in strengthening in every possible way the combat might of the Soviet Armed Forces.

At the same time, the morale of the command and political personnel was undermined due to the quickening unjust dismissals and subsequent arrests by 1936 of both individual commanders and political workers as well as entire groups. The illegality committed upon the requests of the NKVD [People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs] bodies was concealed by the standard phrase

of being condemned "for propagandizing counterrevolutionary, Trotskyite views." This label was fastened to any critical comment, even the mildest, voiced aloud or to the slightest doubt as to the wisdom and geniality of the leadership, particularly Stalin. Sometimes guilt was found due to the absence of ecstatic joy over various measures. The instances of dismissal and arrest were not reported in the press. But the atmosphere in those troop collectives where persons had suddenly disappeared was becoming evermore alarmist.

The arrests of prominent military workers—right up to the commanders of military districts and leading co-workers from the central personnel—began in the first months of 1937. On 1 June of this year, the newspapers published in the section "Current Events" the following statement on the Chief of the RKKA Political Directorate and USSR First Deputy People's Commissar of Defense: "The former member of the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party] Central Committee Ya.B. Gamarnik, having become entangled in his ties with anti-Soviet elements and, obviously, fearing disclosure on 31 May ended his life with suicide." And on 11 June, a release was published "at the USSR procuracy" which stated that the investigation of the case of MSU M.N. Tukhachevskiy, Army Cmdrs 1st Rank I.E. Yakir and I.P. Uborevich, Army Cmdr 2d Rank A.I. Kork, Corps Cmdrs V.M. Primakov, V.K. Putna, B.M. Feldman and R.P. Eydemann, arrested at various times by the NKVD bodies, had been completed and turned over to the courts. The named were accused of violating military duty (the oath), of betraying the motherland, betraying the peoples of the USSR and betraying the RKKA. On the same day, a closed court session was held of the Special Court Attendance of the USSR Supreme Court. All the defendants were stripped of their military ranks and sentenced to the highest criminal punishment of execution.

On 14 June 1937, there was published the Order of the USSR NKO K.Ye. Voroshilov No. 96 (of 12 June 1937) and addressed to all the RKKA personnel; this stated that from 1 through 4 June 1937, in the presence of government members, a military council was held in the presence of the NKO. At the session they heard and discussed the report of K.Ye. Voroshilov about the "traitorous counterrevolutionary military fascistic organization" uncovered by the NKVD and which in being "strictly conspiratorial, for a long time had existed and conducted base subversive wrecking and espionage work in the Red Army."²

The archives hold many documents which irrefutably show that Stalin and his associates of Molotov, Kaganovich, Voroshilov, Yezhov and Beriya were the true instigators, organizers and directors of the criminal extermination of the leading personnel of the Bolshevik Party, the Soviet state, the Red Army and Navy. Let us recall only those which were mentioned at the 22d CPSU Congress and at the Central Committee Plenum in 1957. It was a question primarily of a letter from one of the

Civil War heroes, the former commander of the Kiev Military District, Army Cmdr 1st Rank I.E. Yakir, to Stalin and which was written after his arrest. "...I," wrote I.E. Yakir, "am an honest soldier who is loyal to the party, to the state and to the people, and I have been so for many years. All my conscious life has been spent in unstinting, honest work before the party and its leaders.... I am honest in my every word and I die with words of affection for you, the party and the nation and with an infinite belief in the victory of communism." This letter was the cry from the soul of a person whose death remains an indelible stain on the representatives of the power for the victory of which he had fought all his adult life. On this letter Stalin had written: "Villain and whore." Voroshilov had added: "Completely correct definition," Molotov had signed below this while Kaganovich added: "For the traitor, bastard and...(here followed an unprintable word) there is only one penalty, the death penalty."³

At the June (1957) Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee, Mar G.K. Zhukov read the letter from one, in his description, amazing honest man and military leader who was sitting in prison in 1937. On the eve of his execution he had written a letter to Stalin: "Comrade Stalin. Tomorrow I will be executed. I am completely innocent. I have fought honestly for Soviet power and have never been a traitor." There were even several affectionate words addressed to Stalin. The latter, having read it, wrote in the corner of the sheet: "Everyone lies! Execute him! Stalin." Then followed the signatures: "Agreed, Molotov"; "Agreed scoundrel! A dog's death for the dog. Beriya"; "Monster, Voroshilov"; "Scum! Kaganovich."⁴ Thus, off-handedly was decided the fate of objectionable persons by the completely unaccountable former leaders of the party and the nation.

In November 1937, the people's commissar of internal affairs sent a petition as follows:

"To Comrade Stalin.

"I am forwarding for approval four lists of persons to be turned over to the Court of the Military Collegium:

"1. List No. 1 (General).

"2. List No. 2 (Former military workers).

"3. List No. 3 (Former NKVD workers).

"4. List No. 4 (Wives of enemies of the people).

"I request approval to condemn all under the first category."⁵

"Yezhov."⁶

The lists were reviewed by Stalin and Molotov and on each of them there is the resolution: "In favor. I. Stalin. V. Molotov."⁷

As a result of the mass repressions in 1937, 1938 and the following years, around one-half of the regimental commanders, a majority of the military commissars of brigades, divisions and corps were eliminated from the army. The same fate befell virtually all the brigade and divisional commanders and all corps commanders. All commanders of the military districts were physically exterminated.⁸

According to the data of Gen A.I. Todorskiy, the following were repressed: 34 brigades commissars out of 36, 231 brigades commanders out of 397, 136 divisional commanders out of 199, 25 corps commissars out of 28, 60 corps commanders out of 67, 15 army commissars 2d rank out of 15 (including M.P. Amelin, L.N. Aronshtam, A.S. Bulin, G.I. Veklichev, G.A. Osepyan and I.Ye. Slavin), 2 fleet flag officers 1st rank out of 2 (M.V. Viktorov and V.M. Orlov), 12 army commanders 2d rank out of 12, 2 army commanders 1st rank out of 4, 2 army commissars 1st rank out of 2 (Ya.B. Gamarnik who committed suicide and P.A. Smirnov) and 3 marshals of the Soviet Union out of 5 (M.N. Tukhachevskiy, V.K. Blyukher and A.I. Yegorov).

The press has correctly pointed out that these data are not complete. The information on one or another category of servicemen probably relates to the beginning of 1937 while in calculating the number of repressed they have counted, clearly, only the data of 1937-1938. The repressions continued later. For example, by mid-1939 they had already repressed 5 army commanders 1st rank (I.E. Yakir, I.P. Uborevich, I.P. Belov, I.F. Fedko and M.P. Frinovskiy). In a recently published letter to I.G. Erenburg from the world-famous Soviet publicist Ernst Genri there are the persuasive lines: "No defeat has ever led to such monstrous losses in command personnel. Only the complete surrender of a nation after a lost war could have such a rout as a consequence. Precisely on the eve of the crucial clash with the Wehrmacht, on the eve of the greatest of wars, the Red Army was decapitated. This was done by Stalin."⁹

And here is a statement of A.A. Zhdanov at a memorial ceremony dedicated to the 14th anniversary of the death of V.I. Lenin: "The year 1937 will go down in the history of carrying out Lenin's legacy and plans as a year of the defeat of the enemies of the people."¹⁰ At present, M.S. Gorbachev has assessed these events as follows: "The blame of Stalin and his immediate circle to the party and the people for the committed mass repressions and illegality is enormous and unforgivable. This is a lesson for all generations."¹¹

Such major losses in the senior and particularly the higher command and political personnel in the course of "combating fascist spies" could not help but tell on the political and moral state of all the Army and Navy personnel and on the condition of Soviet military discipline. This must be emphasized particularly for, as was pointed out by M.S. Gorbachev in his report at the joint ceremony of the CPSU Central Committee, the USSR

Supreme Soviet and the RSFSR Supreme Soviet devoted to the 70th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, we "even now encounter attempts to turn away from the painful questions of our history, to remain silent about them and appear as if nothing particular had happened. We cannot agree with this. This would be neglectful of the historical truth and disrespectful to the memory of those who were the innocent victim of the illegality and tyranny."¹²

All the same, I can anticipate that certain readers might say: "We are in favor of a correct treatment of history but what bearing do the illegal repressions have on military discipline? Has not the author avoided the main subject?" No, he has not avoided it for these events had a direct lethal effect on the state of military discipline in the RKKA. Certainly it was a question of the fate and the life of the heroes of the October Revolution and Civil War who had become superior commanders and political workers in the Red Army and Navy and who were also the prime builders of the new, socialist military discipline. As a result of the intentional falsification, these persons were accused of being spies, enemies of the people and destroyed. And how could an ordinary military pilot struggle for high discipline, whom should he believe and whose orders should he carry out, if over a period of 3 or 4 years the superior commander in aviation, the chief of the RKKA Air Forces has been changed several times, and the grounds for removal from this post were always monstrous and alarming with the accusation that yet another enemy of the people had been found. In 1938, Army Cmdr 2d Rank Ya.I. Alksnis was executed. He in 1931-1937 had been a deputy of the USSR Supreme Soviet First Sitting. Then Col Gen A.D. Loktionov (chief of the Air Forces in 1937-1939) and candidate member of the VKP(b) Central Committee was arrested; then Twice Hero of the Soviet Union, Lt Gen Avn Ya.V. Smushkevich (Air Forces chief from November 1939) and candidate member of the VKP(b) Central Committee; Hero of the Soviet Union and 29-year-old Lt Gen Avn P.V. Rychagov (Air Forces chief from August 1940). All three were deputies of the USSR Supreme Soviet First Sitting. And all three without a court trial were executed in October 1941. Only the fifth (in 4 years) Air Forces chief, Lt P.V. Zhigarev, who was appointed to this post in April 1941, survived.

The flagrant injustice and shameless illegality carried out with impunity at the very top of the army ladder against the superior commanders and political workers of the RKKA had an undermining, disheartening effect on all the higher, senior and middle command personnel as well as on the broad masses of junior commanders, Red Armymen and Navymen.

The decline in the authority of the commanders and superiors had to be admitted by the Chief of the RKKA PU [Political Directorate], Army Commissar 1st Rank P.A. Smirnov, who replaced Gamarnik and by I.V. Stalin himself. At a meeting of the political personnel in August 1937, in replying to the question of how the Red Army

had responded to the discovery of the espionage bands, Smirnov pointed out that against the overall background of positive attitudes "there are very many negative and outrightly counterrevolutionary statements. These attitudes run, chiefly, in conversations on the undermining of the authority of the party and government leaders and the undermining of the authority without grounds of the command personnel.... Elements of confusion have gripped a certain portion of the leaders who have lost their will and have let go of the reins. There has been a certain drop in discipline, many accidents, emergencies, suicides, burns and maiming of the personnel.... The number of disciplinary infractions is very high. From 1 January 1937 through 1 May 1937, here we have had the astronomical figure of 400,000."¹³

During a speech by the military council member of the Northern Caucasus Military District, Prokofyev, there was the following dialogue:

"Stalin: And how did the Red Armymen respond to the situation where there were commanders, they were trusted and all of a sudden they were pulled down and arrested? How did they respond to this?"

"Prokofyev: I reported, Comrade Stalin, that in the first period in a number of Red Armymen there were doubts and they voiced their ideas [on how it could be] that such persons as Gamarnik and Yakir and whom the party had trusted for a number of years with high posts turned out to be traitors of the people, traitors of the party.

"Stalin: Well, the party missed here.

"Prokofyev: Yes, the party, supposedly missed this.

"Stalin: Have there been any instances here of the loss of authority for the party, the authority of the military leadership? Let's put it this way: only the devil can understand you, you give us someone one day and then arrest him. God help us understand whom to believe?"

"Voices from the floor: There actually were such conversations. And such notes were submitted."¹⁴

When one of the subsequent speakers tried to assure Stalin that the authority of the party and the army had not been undermined, Stalin interrupted him and declared: "Somewhat undermined."¹⁵

The harmful impact of the illegal mass repressions can be judged from the fact that there was a sharp decline in the level of military discipline with an increased number of suicides, accidents and so forth. According to the data of the RKKA PU, the number of suicides and suicide attempts in the second quarter of 1937, in comparison with the first quarter of the same year, rose by 26.9 percent in the Leningrad Military District, by 40 percent in the Belorussian Military District, by 50 percent in the Kiev Military District, by 90.9 percent in the OKDVA [Separate Red Banner Far Eastern Army], by 133 percent

in the Black Sea Fleet, by 150 percent in the Kharkov Military District and by 200 percent in the Pacific Fleet.¹⁶ While over the period preceding the mass repressions (from 1 January through 15 March 1937), the Air Forces had 7 disasters and 37 accidents, during which 17 persons were killed and 9 wounded, in 1938, over the same period, there were 41 disasters and 55 accidents in which 73 persons were killed and 22 wounded from the flight and technical personnel.¹⁷ As a total for the RKKA, in the peacetime year of 1938 alone, 1,178 persons were killed in extraordinary accidents and 2,904 persons were wounded.¹⁸

Thus, in 1937-1938, several-score thousand of loyal experienced commanders and political workers were removed basically illegally and unjustly. In those whose heads did not roll there was not only a weakening of such qualities as initiative and a creative approach to the job but also there arose natural feelings of uncertainty, timidity, fear and trepidation for one's fate and also mistrust and suspicion for one's fellow servicemen and even superiors and there was a fear of showing high demands for one's subordinates.

Well known, for example, is the personality of one of the prominent military leaders of World War II, MSU K.A. Meretskov. Seemingly his military career went on successfully. In the 1930s, he held posts as the chief of staff of the Belorussian Military District and the Chief of Staff of the OKVDA. At the end of 1936, he distinguished himself in providing aid to the Republicans in Spain and in July 1937, the 40-year-old corps commander became the deputy chief of the RKKA General Staff.

But in October 1937, an "alert" was received about Meretskov and this was, in essence, a denunciation by one of the workers from the OKDVA staff. The "accusations" had been drawn up following the primitive typical scheme of those years: Meretskov, supposedly, at one time had worked on the staff of the Belorussian Military District and the commander there had been Uborevich; Uborevich had been unmasked as an "enemy" and hence Meretskov, too, was clearly an enemy but a still unmasked one. They began to "feel out" and check on Meretskov in every possible way. Finally, on 14 December 1937, the chief of the RKKA PU, P.A. Smirnov, ordered: "Send to Comrade Nikolayev (NKVD). The Meretskov file has been investigated in every possible way."

Meretskov continued to work as the deputy chief of the General Staff. But his wings had been clipped. In a recommendation of Meretskov, the Military Commissar of the General Staff I.V. Rogov on 20 July 1938 wrote: "Recently he has not worked at full strength and has clearly shown a fear to take decisions and give orders. He has avoided signing papers and has not written any resolutions on paper, his mood has been nervous and he has been depressed. In conversation with me he very often recalled that he had been summoned to the NKVD and he had given explanations." Six weeks later, in a

supplement to the recommendation it was noted: "As before, Meretskov is nervous and repeatedly in conversation with Army Commander Shaposhnikov has said that "now everyone is pointing at me but I have had no dealings with the enemies."

Hitler's military was ecstatic. The Chief of the German General Staff, Gen von Beck, in assessing the military situation in the summer of 1938, said that the Russian Army could not be considered an armed force for the bloody repressions had sapped its morale and had turned it into an inert machine.¹⁹

The times demanded immediate measures to restore and strengthen the command and political personnel. On the eve of the war (and in its first months) more than one-quarter of the total number of repressed commanders and political workers had been rehabilitated and returned to the army (among them the future MSUs K.A. Meretskov and K.K. Rokossovskiy, and future Army Gen A.V. Gorbатов, the Corps Cmdr L.G. Petrovskiy and others).

In the prewar years, in the Soviet Armed Forces there had been a rapid process of promoting young commanders who had both served in the troops and on the staffs as well as graduates of the military academies and schools which were constantly increasing the pace of their work. In just one year (from 1 March 1937 through 1 March 1938) the RKKA promoted 39,090 persons of command personnel (not counting political personnel), including 12 persons to positions of commanders of military districts, 35 to corps commanders, 116 to divisional and brigade commanders and 490 persons to regimental and squadron commanders.²⁰ The average age of the regimental commanders at that time was 29-33 years, divisional commanders were 35-38 years, corps commanders and army commanders, 40-43 years. When in April 1939, N.G. Kuznetsov was appointed the People's Commissar of the Navy, he was not yet 37 years old (according to the documents he was actually 35). But youth meant a lack of experience in the commanders who had just been promoted to crucial posts. Many of them did not have any experience at all in command work of such a level. By the beginning of 1940, up to 70 percent of the regimental commanders and over 70 percent of the divisional commanders had worked just one year in these positions.²¹

In the aim of increasing the authority of the Red Army and Navy many commanders were generously awarded new military ranks, including the highest ones. In just one year (beginning from 1 March 1937) the rank of army commander 1st rank was received by one person, army commander 2d rank (here and below also ranks corresponding to it) by 5 persons, corps commander by 30, divisional commander by 71, brigade commander by 257, colonel by 1,346 and major by 5,220 persons. Over the period from 9 February 1939 through 4 April 1940, another 20 corps commanders were given the rank of

army commander 2d rank (I.R. Apanasenko, O.I. Gorodovikov, M.P. Kovalev, I.S. Konev, V.Ya. Kachalov, S.A. Kalinin, K.A. Meretskov, I.V. Tyulenev, M.S. Khozin, G.M. Shtern, V.F. Yakovlev, I.V. Smorodinov, I.V. Boldin, I.G. Zakharkin, M.G. Yefremov, N.V. Kurdyumov, V.D. Grendal, N.N. Voronov, D.G. Pavlov and Ya.V. Smushkevich). On 24 January 1938, the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet approved the Regulation on the Jubilee Medal "Twenty Years of the Worker-Pleasant Red Army." It became a widespread practice to award orders and medals. The material status of the commanders was improved. On 7 May 1940, general and admiral ranks were established. On the same day, the rank of marshal of the Soviet Union was awarded to S.K. Timoshenko, G.I. Kulik and B.M. Shaposhnikov. In the autumn of 1940, the Regulation Governing the Uniform of Red Army Generals was introduced. These measures undoubtedly helped to raise the authority of the commanders and the state of military discipline, however its level was far from corresponding to the demands placed by the situation.

At a meeting held in May 1940 on military ideology, in the presence of the new, just appointed People's Commissar of Defense, Mar Timoshenko, the Deputy People's Commissar I.I. Proskurov stated: "However hard it is, I must say directly that such laxness and a low level of discipline exist in no other army as ours (voices: Right!)." ²²

In particular, such a phenomenon as drunkenness which is inadmissible for a socialist army became widespread. In December 1938, the people's commissar of defense was forced to issue the special Order "On Combating Drunkenness in the RKKA." The people's commissar of defense ordered that in all regiments conferences would be convened for the command and supervisory personnel and here they should describe forcibly all drunken disorders, condemn drunkenness and drunks as an inadmissible and shameful phenomenon. ²³

One of the important measures which had a strong impact on further raising the level of discipline of the personnel and the combat capability of the Red Army and Navy was the Ukase of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet of 12 August 1940 "On Strengthening One-Man Command in the Red Army and Navy." This ukase abolished the institution of military commissars which had been introduced in May 1937 (the position of deputy commander for political affairs was introduced) and full responsibility for all spheres of life and activity of the subunits, units and formations, including political work and political education and the state of discipline, was entrusted to their commanders.

The necessity of further strengthening one-man command and giving the commanders full rights and responsibility for the combat readiness of the troops had been confirmed by the combat experience of the Red Army in the course of the Soviet-Finnish War of 1939-1940. The high trust shown for the command personnel obliged the

solely responsible commanders to more attentively employ the diverse opportunities of party political work and get closer to the party and Komsomol organizations, directing their activities at strengthening discipline and combat readiness of the troops.

The logical conclusion to the chain of measures directed at strengthening military discipline was the introduction on 12 October 1940 of the new Red Army disciplinary regulations. The "Provisional RKKA Disciplinary Regulations of 1925" which had been in effect up to then were cancelled.

The new regulations reinforced the general course of the greatest-possible strengthening of Soviet military discipline.

One of the important lessons in the history of the struggle to strengthen Soviet military discipline in the prewar years is that without a professionally trained and politically tempered command and supervisory personnel it is impossible to ready the army with sufficient success for war against an aggressor. The Army-wide tragedy of 1937-1938 played a fatal role. Regardless of all the measures adopted on the eve of the war, the largely newly (particularly for the superior) recreated command and political personnel was still unable, as the events of 1941 were to show, to fully provide the necessary level of military discipline and troop combat readiness.

Footnotes

1. TsGASA [Central State Archives of the Soviet Army], folio 33987, inv. 3, file 1024, sheet 9; file 1185, sheet 9.

2. KRASNAYA ZVEZDA, 14 June 1937.

3. "XXII syezd KPSS. 17-31 oktyabrya 1961 god: Stenograficheskiy otchet" [The 22d CPSU Congress. 17-31 October 1961: Verbatim Record], Moscow, Politizdat, Vol II, 1962, p 403.

4. OGONEK, No 16, 1988, p 13.

5. The first category in those years meant execution.

6. "XXII syezd KPSS...", Vol III, 1962, p 152.

7. Ibid.

8. See: "Velikaya Otechestvennaya vojna Sovetskogo Soyuza 1941-1945. Kratkaya istoriya" [The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union of 1941-1945. Concise History], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1965, pp 39-40.

9. DRUZHBA NARODOV, No 3, 1988, p 234.

10. PARTIYNO-POLITICHESKAYA RABOTA V RKKA, No 3, 1938, p 73.

11. M.S. Gorbachev, "Oktyabr i perestroyka: revolyutsiya prodolzhayetsya" [October and Perestroyka: The Revolution Continues], Moscow, Politizdat, 1987, p 21.

12. Ibid., p 22.

13. TsGASA, folio 9, inv. 29, file 318, sheets 23, 24.

14. Ibid., sheet 79.

15. Ibid., sheet 103.

16. Ibid., file 354, sheet 278.

17. Ibid., inv. 36, file 2238, sheet 5.

18. Ibid., file 3315, sheets 10-12.

19. See: L. Nikulin, "Tukhachevskiy: Biograficheskii ocherk" [Tukhachevskiy: A Biographical Essay], Moscow, 1964, p 194.

20. TsGASA, folio 33987, inv. 3, file 947, sheets 93, 94.

21. "Velikaya Otechestvennaya vojna...", p 40.

22. TsGASA, folio 9, inv. 36, file 4252, sheet 191.

23. Ibid., folio 4, inv. 15, file 20, sheet 480.

(To be continued)

Document

MATERIALS ON THE MINUTES OF THE SESSION OF THE MILITARY COUNCIL OF THE KIEV MILITARY DISTRICT

No 2 of 26 March 1938

From the Report on the State of the Personnel of the Kiev Military District

1. The enemies of the people who aim at preparing a defeat of the RKKA have chosen their own personnel for all leading positions and have promoted a narrow group of persons to high positions while the growing dedicated party and non-party Bolsheviks were left to "stew" in low-level work.

As a result of this, enemies of the people and their lackeys have ended up in a majority of the leadership positions of the district staff, as commanders, commissars, chiefs of staff of the corps and divisions and partially the regiments.

For this reason, the military council has set as the central task the "eradication" of the enemies of the people and the selection of dedicated and growing commanders to leadership positions.

As a result of the merciless "eradication" of the Trotskyite-Bukharinite and bourgeois-nationalistic elements, on 25 March 1938, the following replacement of district leadership had taken place.

Name of Position	By TOE	Replaced	Percentage of Replacement
Corps commanders	9	9	100
Divisional commanders	25	24	96
Brigade commanders	9	5	55
Regimental commanders	135	87	64
Commandants of fortified areas	4	4	100
Corps chiefs of staff	9	6	67
Divisional chiefs of staff	25	18	72
Fortified area chiefs of staff	4	3	75
Regimental chiefs of staff	135	78	58
Chiefs of district staff sections	24	19	84

2. In carrying out the instructions of Comrades Stalin and Voroshilov, the district military council has carried out extensive work in purging the command personnel not only on the higher but also the middle and senior group of all hostile and politically unstable elements and are continuing this work further.

As a total 2,922 persons were dismissed from the district units for political-moral reasons and 1,066 persons were arrested by the NKVD bodies.

In carrying out the work of purging the leadership ranks of hostile elements, individual mistakes and instances of the incorrect dismissal of individual commanders were made. At present, in acting on the incoming complaints, of the number of those dismissed 30 persons have been restored to the ranks of the RKKA and a special commission is at work on reviewing the complaints of all persons dismissed with their appearance before the commission.

All work of reviewing the complaints of those dismissed will be completed by 1 May of this year.

3. Along with purging the district leadership personnel great work has also been done to move the command personnel and promote to higher positions young growing and tested commanders who are dedicated to the cause of the party of Lenin and Stalin. Here 2,346 persons have been promoted including 34 persons of the higher command personnel, 565 persons of the senior personnel and 1,776 persons of the middle command personnel.

From the Decree of the Kiev Military District Military Council "On the State of the District Command, Supervisory and Political Personnel"

March 1938

1. As a result of the great work done to purge the RKKA ranks of enemy elements and promote from below commanders, political workers and superiors who are totally dedicated to the cause of the party of Lenin and Stalin, the command, supervisory and political personnel has rallied strongly around our party and the leader of the peoples Comrade Stalin and they are providing political strength and success in raising the combat might of the RKKA units.

2. The young command, supervisory and political personnel promoted to leadership positions is fully trained energetic workers who need to acquire practical experience in the leadership of formations and units.

3. The enemies of the people were able to play dirty tricks in the area of personnel placement.

The military council has set as its main task: to completely "eradicate" the remnants of hostile elements in profoundly studying each commander, superior, political worker in promotion and in boldly promoting tested, dedicated and growing personnel.

4. The chief of the Personnel section of the Kiev Military District and the personnel sections of the Political Directorate of the Kiev Military District and Air Forces prior to 15 April of this year are to bring up to full strength the units, formations and their staffs both those which have converted to the new TOE as well as the newly constituted ones.

Commander of Kiev Military District Army Cmdr 2d Rank (Timoshenko)

Military Council Member of the Kiev Military District Corps Commissar (Smirnov)

Military Council Member and Secretary of the Ukrainian CP (Bolshevik) Central Committee (Khrushchev)

Source: TsGASA, folio 25880, inv. 4, file 4.

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World Outlook and Military History

00010009f VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL
in Russian No 3, Mar 89 (signed to press 28 Feb 89)
pp 48-57

[Article, published under the heading "Viewpoints, Judgments, Versions," by Col Ye.I. Rybkin, Honored Scientist of the RSFSR, Doctor of Philosophical Sciences, Professor: "World Outlook and Military History"]

[Text] Military history, as a science along with the other component parts and special sectors, studies the history of wars and military art—these close but still different subjects. Let us recall that the history of wars is concerned with examining particular periods in the life of

peoples or mankind, when armed clashes have occurred and during which all the material and spiritual forces of the peoples have been mobilized. Wars have a number of social causes and consequences and at times they involve changes in the way of life and thinking of entire generations. The history of military art shows us how the methods of waging armed combat in a war have developed, how the process of armed combat has occurred or does occur, it assesses the role and activities of the military leaders of varying degrees and determines the nature of the involvement of the masses of soldiers in the fight.

It is possible to know history by directing one's glance not only to the past but also to the present and future. As one learns about these one discovers two aspects in the history of wars: the methodological (practical) and the ideological (axiological).

The methodological aspect pursues strictly practical goals.

A knowledge of the history of military art, whatever the ancient events it examines, is an indispensable indication of an officer's high culture. Military history encompasses a vast range of events. The questions of the rise of the causes of wars, their consequences must be known by each man, for as yet there has not been a generation of persons which has not been touched by a war to one degree or another.

The history of wars is closely tied to ideology or world outlook because in the process of studying it one comes to understand the place of war in the world and one develops an attitude toward a war and the role of man in it (the soldier, citizen, outside observer or a party, class, nation and so forth) as well as to a war and military operations (the art of waging them) as a means for changing reality in one's interests.

It has long been known that in ideology there is present a historical awareness of man or even historical self-awareness, that is, it includes such a category as an individual's understanding of his place in history.¹ But since over all history the world has constantly alternated between a state of war and a state of peace, there clearly exists also a "military history awareness" as a part of a general historical awareness and ideology.

Without historical awareness there can be no philosophical awareness which determines a man's position in life, his attitude toward reality, toward the present and future and which directs a person to various goals in life. An ignorance of history, including military, gives rise to civil ignorance. A man is the product of the past which produced him. It is present in him—in his good or bad traits. It is impossible to assess the present and predict the future without knowing what happened previously. Incidentally, these are very trivial truths. However, they must be constantly repeated since an understanding of the past, in the given instance the military past, is at

times substantially distorted. The reasons for this are: a) the determination of man's awareness by his social status; social subjectivity and narrow social interests; b) general cultural backwardness, ignorance, underdeveloped intellect; c) alien influences.

At present, during the period of the profound restructuring of the economic bases, the political appearance and spiritual activity of Soviet society, we have encountered both positive and negative influences of these factors. No one would deny, for example, that perestroika and glasnost have unfettered the awareness of people, they have created the grounds for the appearance of diverse opinions and have made it possible to freely assess contemporary and past events and voice requests, demands....

However, these phenomena also have a negative aspect: an unique "cult of human rights" has arisen and before this the problems of duty, discipline and the responsibility of the individual to society have retreated. There is no doubt about it: the morass of the period of stagnation is drying up and the mass fear inherent to the Stalinism era is disappearing.

At the same time, clearly negative facts are appearing, particularly in the sphere touching upon historical awareness. At the last, November Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee and at the 12th Session of the USSR Supreme Soviet much was said about this and rather sharply.

As is known, there is a search for the so-called "blank spots" in history and incidentally these are rather not "blank" but "black," for all the discovered "spots" in their examination turn out to be (largely with the subjective view of the authors) gloomy, negative phenomena. The impression arises that these "spots" have already covered and possibly shaded the entire history of our party and state. As a result a rather gloomy picture has arisen and the finest pages in the history of our motherland and the history of the CPSU telling about the socialist period are crossed out. It has somehow happened that the distortions of the historical facts by Stalin and the Stalinists have been replaced by distortions and accents of the opposite sort. Almost solid negative views are now inherent to our historical thought.

This aspect of glasnost works to destroy socialist historical awareness and possibly ideology. There is less military history than there is the history of the party, economy and culture. All the same, here under the slogan "It is Essential to Know All the Truth!" distortions are committed and the image of the military history of the Soviet state is warped. In particular, this is apparent in the desire to prove that the Civil War in Soviet Russia was not inevitable, that responsibility for it rested on the Bolsheviks who had organized a voluntaristic "Red Terror" and were to blame for the fact that the nation, as a result of the fratricidal war, was put back in its

development; to falsify the essence of events in the period of 1938-1941, to eliminate the historical significance of the diplomatic step of the USSR in August 1939; to persuade us that military art in the Soviet Army in 1941-1945 was on a low level, and the victories achieved by it do not correspond to the high praise recognized at present throughout the world; to introduce into military history certain rectifications and thereby directly or indirectly consign to neglect that of which we are proud.

We should point out that the tone in this unseemly matter of the intentional distortion of historical realities are set by people who are far removed from military history, that is, literary writers, public affairs writers and newspaper journalists who forget the Leninist principle of a party approach in literature, who rush for an anarchistic "freedom of press" and desire to make their name by any sensation.

We are confronted by the monstrous fact of a move from a condemnation of Stalinism to a condemnation of everything that is vitally determined by socialism an anomalous outgrowth on which there was Stalinism. The extreme ignorance of entire generations on the elementary questions of military history to a certain degree have caused what is presently happening. It is no accident that masses of people took on faith the "great feats" of Stalin in the Civil War and even more in the Great Patriotic War. At the same time, we cannot deny the numerous accomplishments of Stalin in these periods. Finally, we know who is involved with military-patriotic education of the people (worse and worse each passing year) but we are not informed as to who and what directs the pen of the people endeavoring to adapt the postulates of the ideological subversion of imperialism against the USSR to the slogans of perestroika, who totally abandon the various "voices of freedom" overseas and set to slandering socialism and its history.

The unsubstantiated assertions by the new-found proponents of pseudotruth demand an immediate rebuff.

On the question of whether it would have been possible to avoid the terrors of the Civil War in our country, a good answer has been provided, for example, by the Corresponding Member of the USSR Academy of Sciences P.V. Volobuyev and we refer the readers interested in a sociological analysis of this problem to his article.²

It must be emphasized that it would have been possible to avoid such a war only with an alliance between the proletarian party and the petty bourgeois ones, the SRs and Mensheviks. However, the latter were the accomplices of the organizers of the Civil War having entered into an alliance with the local and foreign bourgeoisie. Hence, it was not the Bolsheviks who initiated this war which brought the nation terrible devastation and had fatal consequences for the further fate of socialism in

Soviet Russia (incidentally, the social consequences of the Civil War in our country have not been studied and this question up to now has remained a "closed zone").

Our Civil War was a historical inevitability. It is impossible to dispute its great purgative strength and just character. We feel that this is of primary significance for communist education. A failure to recognize these truths is clearly a criterion for the individual's abandonment of the positions of socialism and progress.

One must take a different attitude toward the errors, without losing the main inviolable vital principle of loyalty to the cause of socialism. Certainly more must be said about the errors than has been but without relish, with pain in the heart, in ardently desiring to correct them and not repeat them. For example, the attempt to aid the Afghan Revolution turned out to be ineffective and involved very grievous sacrifices. But does this deny the great purpose of the international aid and can we forget the heroism of our soldiers and the skill demonstrated by them? A correctly chosen position is also an imperative for the military history researcher.

The times also demand the introduction of clarity into assessing the military-political decisions adopted on the eve of the war. A number of writers, in particular, have doubted not only the necessity and advisability of the Soviet-German Nonaggression Pact (August 1939) and the Treaty of Friendship and the Frontier (September 1939) but state rather unambiguously that these treaties "on behalf of Stalin" were a betrayal of the "Western democracies" and the "enemies of Hitler" (that is to say the "Munichers," the Daladier government in France and the Chamberlain government in England). Thereby, in their opinion, the Soviet Union missed an opportunity to prevent World War II and even accelerated its start.³

Let us not return to the long clarified and settled questions. Soviet policy in 1938-1941 has been given a proper assessment by the most prominent researchers of the history of World War II: Doctor of Philosophical Sciences, Prof S.A. Tyashkevich, Doctor of Historical Sciences, Prof O.A. Rzheshhevskiy, Doctor of Historical Sciences F.N. Kovalev⁴ and others.

In turn, I can say that the response to the signing of the Soviet-German Pact in the masses, particularly among the Komsomol members, was stormy and negative. Of course, we could not discuss this step by the government out loud at a meeting or assembly, however in informal conversations we, people who with our mother's milk had imbued antifascism and a desire for "world revolution," recognized these treaties as wrong. Only certain comrades felt that "here lies some deeper meaning," and they argued their thesis with a jocular statement in the spirit of the times: "Comrade Stalin could not make such a big mistake."

Yes, at that time, we judged superficially. But it is still clear that Stalin and the leadership of the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)], in resolving foreign policy questions, proceeded from what was dictated by the laws of history. Certainly our situation was critical. For this reason, some should be reminded of the instructions of V.I. Lenin that we could not hold out alone, when confronted by the unified camp of imperialism. The leader of the world's first proletarian state considered it essential to "split the pacifist camp of the international bourgeoisie from the coarse bourgeois, aggressive bourgeois, reactionary bourgeois camp."⁵

It can be assumed that the splitting of the imperialist camp and the clash only with a portion of its forces (initially this was the entente and then the Hitler bloc) was a guarantee for the survival of socialism in that world at that time. At present, many argue that it was not possible to reach agreement with England and France on checking Nazi aggression. Such an opinion, for example, is supported by Doctor of Historical Sciences O.A. Chubaryan. In an article "On the Threshold of World War II"⁶ he points out that in the designated period an opportunity was missed to preserve peace and this caused a number of immediate negative psychological and diplomatic consequences. M.I. Semiryaga is even more categorical. In his article "23 August 1939" there are such phrases: "...In extending the state of peace **only for itself** (emphasis mine.—Ye.R.), the Soviet Union paid an extremely high price but the pact did not guarantee the national interests of our country.... The concluding of the pact was a political misstep by the Soviet leadership."⁷

One can scarcely agree with this. One thing is irrefutable: the behavior of our diplomatic representatives in 1939-1940 was not amoral or incorrect. It was forced upon us and it produced a striking effect. All the time, up to the fall of France in the summer of 1940, we were threatened by the creation of an united front of imperialism against us. But by several unexpected moves of Soviet diplomacy it was possible ultimately to achieve an unforeseen, simply improbable, as it seemed even recently, diplomatic victory: it was possible to split the imperialist world and to such a degree that the then nonaggressive part of it—the United States and England (after the summer of 1940)—not only remained outside the anti-Soviet front but also took our side. I propose that this was the greatest diplomatic victory in the first half of the 20th Century.

Of course, if we look now at the situation which arose in those years and are guided by the principles of the "new thinking," then the "conspiracy" with Germany appears quite reprehensible. One can understand the regrets of Comrade Chubaryan voiced in the above-mentioned article. But certainly a historian, a military historian, should think in the categories of those times which he is studying. War at that time was absolutely inevitable. It

was merely a question of with whom the first "clash" would be and what ultimately the balance of forces would be. The latter developed in our favor.

Thus, the Soviet-German pacts of 1939 in practical terms predetermined the victory in 1945. And I would like to focus the attention of military historians studying the consequences and significance of our policy in those years on one other important detail: the main thing is not that we put off the time of attack by Hitler's hordes on our country, rather the main thing is that we were able to split away the strongest capitalist states and ultimately put together an anti-Hitler coalition.

The importance of a correct ideological assessment of the events of that period is truly enormous. The Soviet Union betrayed no one. It acted as historical necessity required. In the report "October and Perestroika: The Revolution Continues," Comrade M.S. Gorbachev emphasized: "They say that the decision which the Soviet Union took, having concluded the Nonaggression Pact with Germany, was not the best. Possibly that is the case if one is guided not by harsh reality but rather speculative abstractions removed from the context of the times. Under these conditions the question was approximately as it was during the Brest Peace: would our nation be independent or not, would socialism exist in the world."⁸

The next "major" question is the question of the nature of Soviet military art in World War II and which has come up again in line with the seeping into the press of unofficial data concerning the total losses of the Soviet Union in the Great Patriotic War and the losses on the battlefields. It is a fact that our losses greatly exceeded enemy losses. In the process of preparing the new 10-volume edition "Velikaya Otechestvennaya voyna sovetskogo naroda" [The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet People], publications on this question have been increasing and in them (for now in the form of hints) we are beginning to hear opinions long present in the West that the Soviet Army was victorious over the enemy not in ability but in numbers, in inundating the enemy with a "mountain of killed," that we "simply did not know how to fight and we ended the war not knowing how to fight. We shed our blood and buried the enemy with our corpses."⁹ Ultimately this can do irremediable harm to the ideological and military-patriotic education of the people.

Losses in a war must be correctly counted, classified and explained. For the sake of justice, it must be pointed out that in the 12-volume "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny" [History of World War II] there are actually no figures on the Soviet Army losses. As a person who took a direct part in the mid-70s in collecting information on the losses and their analysis, I can say directly: this information does exist and it is rather exhaustive. Certain figures turned up in the press a long time ago. At that time,

instructions came from the circle of L.I. Brezhnev on a ban to publish and use data on losses in military history works. As far as I know, at present work has resumed on clarifying this.

However, the data concerning our losses and presented in a sensational spirit ("look how many more than the enemy!") have already appeared in various newspapers and magazines. Here is one of the fresh examples. In an interview with the journal *POLITICHESKOYE OBRAZOVANIYE*, Prof M.I. Semiryaga (previously one of the editors-in-chief of "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny") correctly criticized certain methods for selecting our data on the losses of both sides (for example, when the "irrecoverable" losses of the enemy included both killed, wounded and prisoners) pointed out the unsubstantiated nature of the overall figure of our losses of 20 million persons first released by L.I. Brezhnev in 1965. At the same time, the author himself makes major areas in assessing and comparing the losses. For example, having delimited the losses of the army and the nonbelligerent population, he states that our army lost 10 million killed and wounded while the German Army only 2 million.¹⁰ The difference is impressive! In our view, a figure of 10 million can be accepted only having included in this number those who fell on the battlefield and the 4.5 million prisoners of war exterminated by the Nazis (the total number of Soviet persons taken prisoner, according to the data available in West Germany, was 5,734,528 persons).¹¹ Information on the extermination of prisoners of war and civilians was published by the former USSR Procurator P.R. Rudenko in 1969. "On Soviet territory subject to occupation," he wrote, "the Nazi invaders exterminated and tortured 6,074,857 nonbelligerent inhabitants...and 3,912,283 Soviet prisoners of war...." Some 4,128,796 were deported to Germany and a large portion of them perished. Another several hundred thousand prisoners of war were destroyed on German territory.¹² Consequently, the loss of around 4.5 million Soviet prisoners of war, in our view, is confirmed.

Unconvincing are the data on the losses given by B.V. Sokolov in the journal *VOPROSI ISTORII*, No. 9 for 1988. In referring to a number of works, he points to the number of persons mobilized into the Soviet Armed Forces of 30.6 million persons, including 8.5 killed on the battlefield, 2.5 dying from wounds, 5.8 million prisoners of war and 25 million wounded. As a result, one obtains 41.8 million persons. This is fundamentally incorrect, as at the end of the war more than 9 million men remained in the Soviet Armed Forces. Here there are two errors. In the first place, instead of the number of wounded one must keep in mind the number of woundings. In the second place, the author adds up figures from different sources. It turns out that for the author the number of losses is 30-40 percent above the total number of servicemen during the war.

At the same time, the losses of the German Wehrmacht considering Austria were 3.5 million men, plus the losses of the German allies of up to 600,000 men.¹³ But no one

executed the German prisoners. Virtually all of them (with the exception of those dying from disease or from various injuries) returned home. Here, incidentally, it is possible to reply to the question of the reader of LITERATURNAYA GAZETA, I.L. Belov¹⁴ on how at the beginning of the Great Patriotic War over 4 million of our servicemen were taken prisoner, that is, more than were in the entire Soviet Army at the start of the war. Such "naive" ignorance of military history is striking. At the moment of Germany's attack on the USSR, the army had already 5.4 million persons. The "meandering" figure on the number of Soviet prisoners of war during the first year of the war (from 2 to 4 million persons) is explained very simply. In pushing deep into the interior of the nation, the Nazis took prisoner hundreds of thousands of Soviet persons who had been mobilized, with uniforms and insignias (the reserve soldiers and officers) but they could not be termed military for they roamed the roads of the war without weapons and without subordination to a definite command. Although it must be pointed out that this question was not studied by our military historians and not raised in the 1970s. There is the assumption that the number of such prisoners of war could reach 1.5-2 million persons (the author's opinion based on personal observations and the questioning of participants in the first weeks and months of the war).

We had many prisoners, particularly in the first 18 months of the war. During the first months there were 3.9 million of them.¹⁵ Later their number quickly began to decline. For the enemy the curve of these losses increased continuously and this is easily explainable by the very course of the war. We went from defeats to victories while our enemies went in the reverse direction. Moreover, the fate of the prisoners was as diverse as the fate of the nonbelligerent population. German losses from aerial bombings were, for example, around 600,000 killed and 800,000 wounded.¹⁶

The ideological aspect of such an "anatomy of losses" is clear. The great difference in the losses is primarily the result of the differing political nature of the war. On the one hand, a defensive, just liberation war was being waged and, on the other, an aggressive one and its compulsory program included the extermination of the maximum number of persons in the enemy camp, including nonbelligerent inhabitants and prisoners.

But still after all these calculations, a rather unpleasant residue remains. It seems to me that on the battlefields (with the exception of Manchuria) our army lost at least twice the number killed than did the enemy. And such a depressing amount of losses was brought about not only by the first 18 months of the war which were a setback for us. Even during the period of our complete superiority on the liberated territories of Poland, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania and Yugoslavia, around 1 million persons perished in the last war year.¹⁷ Hence, we must seek out the purely military factors in this. What were these factors?

The first and probably the most important. This was the direct result of the repressive policy of Stalin. The destruction of the better theoretically and practically trained portion of the command personnel (up to 44,000 commanders and political workers and basically the superior level)¹⁸ led to a situation where the promotion of new commanders and military leaders occurred during the heavy fighting, when they had to gain experience in leadership, learning primarily from their own mistakes.

Secondly was the surprise of the enemy's attack and our hurried retreat, at times even panic and flight, fighting in an encirclement and ending with capture. Then occurred the second major "hemorrhaging of the command personnel" which had scarcely recovered its losses from the end of the 1930s.

The third factor was the delayed transition of the army to a professional system in the place of the territorial militia one. Regular training of a mass sort was actually given only to the inductees born in 1918-1922, virtually all of whom perished or were captured during the first weeks and months of the war.

Let us recall that we had switched to the regular professional system of training the army only in 1940, while Germany had adopted this in 1938. Incidentally, the article by Lt Col Savinkin published on 6 November 1988 in the newspaper MOSKOVSKIYE NOVOSTI points to the transition from the territorial-militia system to the regular professional one as one of the reasons for our defeat in 1941. One feels shame for an author capable of such an irresponsible statement. Is it not time in a more careful and skilled manner to review the articles published by certain of our newspapers and magazines on military and military history questions so as not to allow cheap dubious sensations on their pages?

There is, finally, one other factor which seems to me exceptionally important, although for now it has not been seriously investigated by our military historians. After the defeat on the Kursk Salient, in realizing that the war had already been actually lost, the German generals, politicians and even Hitler set out to draw it out as much as possible hoping to split the anti-Hitler coalition. In 1943, after the Kursk Battle, the anti-Soviet and anticommunist forces intensified their actions beginning to intimidate with the "threat of communism." Incidentally, a history of ideological warfare in World War II has not been written even now.

The danger of the rise of a bloc of Germany with its then still enemies in the West as well as the withdrawal from the war with the elimination of Hitler and his clique was constantly growing. For this reason we emphasize again that we had to hurry, launching blow after blow and at times not even counting the losses.

In the West they praise the generalship abilities of I.V. Stalin, G.K. Zhukov and other of our leading military figures, but here, in maliciously smirking, they speak about the "strategy and tactics of blood and flesh" of the Soviet generals. Certainly in the character of not only Stalin but also Zhukov, one can trace a disregard for the life of soldiers (and officers) in a war. But the excessive losses are also explainable by the objective factor, by the need for victories, a continuous series of them, in order to accelerate the defeat of the enemy. This must not be forgotten! War is policy and the laws of the latter prevail.

On this issue I would like to voice one other comment of a philosophical-ideological nature. The obvious danger of a campaign over the "too great losses" in the Great Patriotic War which is already appearing entails a jolt of rather strong destructive force. The problem is that the imperialists have been able to impose on us the "matter of human rights." In truth, the question of which man has more rights—our own or the bourgeois—is intentionally not gone into. At present, everything has become mixed and confused and the enemies of socialism are triumphant.

But if one turns to Russian, Soviet and foreign military history, it becomes clear that the main thing for any soldier is not the problem of rights but rather the problem of discipline and duty. Of course, the history of wars indicates that military duty and discipline have frequently ensured the achieving of unjust ends. But it is also known that they have served just goals.

The clear doing of duty by the men, belief in communist ideals and the superiority of socialism were that powerful source which fashioned the victory that grew out of the ruins of the first defeat. We also write little about something else. The war for an unjust cause was waged against us by an enemy which possessed much higher military-technical skills, overall culture and discipline and in this regard we were clearly weaker. At present, many say why did we lose even during the rapid and efficient offensive strikes more equipment than the Wehrmacht as many of our tanks which were the best in the world and our aircraft were lost. Clearly the reason here lies in the little time provided for the cultural revolution in our country. In their mass the people had not been able to master equipment both on the job and in the army. "When the storm of war descends again," wrote V.V. Mayakovskiy, "we should be able to aim and shoot...." Only the participants of the war and the frontliners could recall how many excess losses we suffered due to the fact that the enemy was able to aim and shoot better...."

What ideological conclusions should we draw from this very brief review of the "painful" questions of our military history?

We must instill order in the matter of propagandizing the military history of the Soviet state. We must learn to explain the errors, setbacks and historical flaws not from

the viewpoint of the "invalidity" of our personnel with the reason being here the supposed flaws in the development of the socialist system or the wrath of Stalin's personality (although the latter was important), but relying on our own knowledge of the concrete historical conditions under which the forces of the belligerents matured as well as the international and domestic policy, we must restore our heroic past to all its rights.

Many losses and setbacks have been linked to the name and criminal activities of Stalin, and not only Stalin. But certainly it is essential to realize that the path "from the wooden plow to space" traveled over these 40 years, in the hostile encirclement of this uncultured and backward nation was hence not easy and that the conditions for our state's survival were harsh and complex. This could not help but be reflected in military history and military art. The price of victories would have been many-fold less under different historical conditions.

It is essential to know military history! To know and then judge it! Now one can frequently hear how people judge Suvorov, Peter I, Zhukov, Tukhachevskiy or Eisenhower, having taken a look by chance at some sensational articles.

Military history at present is little studied. How can it become an element of ideological knowledge and judgments even if the students, and at times the instructors of the military academies in their mass have little knowledge of world, Russian and Soviet military history.

Yes, at present, we are working for eternal peace! But is everyone in the world in the same frame of mind? And even if peace prevails, are military feats and the glory of past generations a complete evil? How can we think the inadmissible! Certainly in the wars of previous ages at times peoples and states were reborn.

It is difficult, but one cannot help but write about another, equally important problem. Soviet socialist patriotism, as an indispensable element of the Marxist-Leninist ideology, is presently living through a serious crisis related to the outright offensive by the nationalistic elements in many of the Union republics. The problem of nationality separateness has risen in our country. And certainly the USSR republics are linked not only by economic and spiritual but also military history. In it there have been many difficult moments but one thing is indisputable: in the complex and active struggle of the peoples for socialism, a new historical community has been formed, the Soviet people.

Who could consign this vastly important historical conclusion to oblivion and when? Why does the diverse and different-colored population of, for instance, the United States, Canada, Mexico and India proudly style itself the American people, the Mexican people or the Indian people while the USSR people suddenly have lost the right to call themselves a single people, a united new (and truly new as it was!) historical community? This has

happened in the period of glasnost and perestroyka. In viewing the given phenomenon from the standpoint of a military man and the defender of a united fatherland and peoples created by socialism, we cannot help but say here that an "evil hand" was at work. Without the concept of a single Soviet people, their single military history is inconceivable. Thus, military history awareness has always been and will be an important determining factor in the vital stance of the Soviet people. Under present-day conditions, when the military danger has not been eliminated, we are obliged to strengthen national defense. Military history in a correct but party-based manner should provide the Soviet military with knowledge about the military past and be a strong, cohesive factor for all the personnel of the USSR Armed Forces.

Footnotes

1. In speaking about man, we have in mind the individual, although generally this thesis can also be applied to human relations as a whole, to peoples, classes and to mankind.
2. KOMMUNIST, No 16, 1988, pp 91-101.
3. See, for example, the article by Prof M.I. Semiryagi "23 August 1939," LITERATURNAYA GAZETA, 5 October 1988, p 14.
4. See: S.A. Tyushkevich, "The 1939 Pact: There Was No Alternative," LITERATURNAYA GAZETA, 26 October 1988; F.N. Kovalev, O.A. Rzheshvskiy, "Thus Began the War," PRAVDA, 1 September 1988.
5. V.I. Lenin, PSS [Complete Collected Works], Vol 44, p 408.
6. See: KOMMUNIST, No 14, 1988, pp 102-112.
7. LITERATURNAYA GAZETA, 5 October 1988.
8. M.S. Gorbachev, "Oktyabr i perestroyka: revolyutsiya prodolzhayetsya. 1917-1987" [October and Perestroyka: The Revolution Continues. 1917-1987], Moscow, Politizdat, 1987, pp 52-53.
9. LITERATURNAYA GAZETA, 18 May 1988.
10. POLITICHESKOYE OBRAZOVANIYE, No 17, 1988, p 43.
11. Ibid., p 42.
12. PRAVDA, 24 March 1969.
13. Yu.Ye. Vlashevich, "Vo chto obkhoditsya narodam imperialisticheskoye voyny" [What the Imperialist Wars Have Cost the Peoples], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1971, pp 35-36.
14. LITERATURNAYA GAZETA, 13 June 1988.
15. VOPROSY ISTORII, No 9, 1988, p 122.
16. Yu.Ye. Vlashevich, op. cit., p 37.
17. S.M. Shtemenko, "Generalnyy shtab v gody voyny" [The General Staff in the War Years], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1974, pp 111, 156, 226, 276, 350, 370, 412.
18. POLITICHESKOYE OBRAZOVANIYE, No 17, 1988, p 38.

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On the Death of M.V. Frunze and F.E. Dzerzhinskiy

00010009g VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL
in Russian No 3, Mar 89 (signed to press 28 Feb 89)
pp 54-61

[Article by Roy Medvedev: "On the Death of M.V. Frunze and F.E. Dzerzhinskiy"]

[Text] Dear Editors! I am sending you a short article the content of which can be judged from its title. It seems to me that this might be of interest to the readers of VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL.

Roy Medvedev

In the mid-1920s, the membership of the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)] Central Committee was small. After the 18th Party Congress it included 53 members and after the 16th it was increased by just 10 persons. Individual leaders who were members of it in terms of their authority were not lower but sometimes even higher than certain members of the Politburo and Secretariat of the Central Committee. The enormous authority of these persons naturally limited the influence and power of Stalin and all the other party leaders fighting for leadership. Certainly, 2 persons stood out in the greatest independence of their views: M.V. Frunze and F.E. Dzerzhinskiy. A significant share of power was also concentrated in their hands.

As is known, M.V. Frunze even long before the October Revolution had become a professional Bolshevik revolutionary. In moving to service in the Red Army after brief work on the Ivanovo-Voznesenskiy party gubkom [provincial committee] and the gubispolkom [provincial executive committee] at the beginning of 1919 he was already in command of the Southern Troop Group of the Eastern Front and this dealt a series of substantial defeats to the Kolchak armies. Several months later, having headed the Eastern Front, he carried out a series of successful battles for the liberation of the Urals and Central Asia. Appointed in September 1920 the commander of the Southern Front, he led the defeat of Wrangel in Northern Tauria and the Crimea and after the end of the Civil War he was a representative of the Revolutionary Military Council [RVS] and then the commander of all the armed forces of the Ukraine and

Crimea. In contrast to such commanders as K.Ye. Voroshilov, M.V. Frunze had a perfect mastery of military strategy and tactics and had great authority not only among the Bolshevik commissars but also among the military specialists from the generals and officers of the Tsarist Army. It was he after the removal of Trotsky who in January 1925 was appointed the new chairman of the USSR RVS and the people's commissar for military and naval affairs. The initiator of establishing a unified military doctrine and the author of a series of fundamental works on military theory which generalized the experience of the Civil War and had become the basis of Soviet military science, M.V. Frunze, while he was only a candidate Politburo member in 1924, was an independent and decisive political and military leader. His authority in the nation and the party was very great, not to say in the Red Army.

Even better known in the party and nation was F.E. Dzerzhinskiy who was called, not without reason, the "knight of the revolution." He had joined the Social Democratic movement in 1895 and in 1907 had become a member of the RSVRP [Russian Social Democratic Workers Party] Central Committee, and even before a member of the Main Board of the Social Democratic Party of Poland and Lithuania. Having spent 11 years in prison, exile and hard labor in Tsarist Russia, F.E. Dzerzhinskiy was elected to the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party in April 1917. After the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution, the party trusted precisely him to organize and head the special bodies of the Soviet government including the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counterrevolution and Sabotage (VChK) and later the Military Council of the Internal Security Troops and the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs which included the Border Troops and the people's militia. F.E. Dzerzhinskiy continuously headed the bodies of the VChK and OGPU [United State Political Directorate], simultaneously leading for a number of years the People's Commissariat of Railroads, he headed the work of eliminating the problem of homeless children and from 1924, was also appointed the chairman of the Superior Council of the National Economy (VSNKh). Like M.V. Frunze, F.E. Dzerzhinskiy in 1924 had been elected only a candidate member of the Politburo. However, his enormous political and moral authority and no less the significant power made Feliks Edmondovich one of the key figures in the Bolshevik leadership.

The unexpected death of M.V. Frunze in 1925 and F.E. Dzerzhinskiy in 1926 altered the balance of forces in the party leadership, having undoubtedly strengthened the positions of Stalin who in 1925-1926 had been able to take under his personal control also the leadership of the Red Army and the OGPU which would have been impossible under Frunze and Dzerzhinskiy.

The death of the 40-year-old M.V. Frunze who had suffered from stomach ulcers gave rise to particularly many contradictory interpretations. Any experienced

physician even in 1925 was well aware that with a gastric ulcer one must first of all carry out conservative treatment and only in the event of its unsuccessfulness should they resort to surgery. M.V. Frunze did not want to undergo the operation, preferring conservative treatment, all the more as by the autumn of 1925 he felt very good as the ulcer virtually had not made itself felt. A letter survives from Mikhail Vasilyevich to his wife and written by him on 26 October 1925, that is, 5 days before his death.

"Well now...the end has come to my trials," this letter states. "Tomorrow morning I am moving to the Soldatenkov Hospital and the day after (on Thursday) the operation will take place. When you receive this letter, you will probably already have in your hands the telegram announcing its results. I now feel absolutely healthy and find it somewhat amusing not only to go but even to think about the operation. Nevertheless, both consultants have ruled that it be done. I am personally satisfied with this decision. Let them have a good look now as to what is there and try to set out a real treatment. More and more frequently I have the notion that there is nothing seriously wrong or in the opposite case it would be somehow hard to explain the fact of my rapid recovery after rest and treatment...."

The question arises of why, regardless of such obvious success of the conservative treatment, both consultants ruled on doing the operation? This improbable decision for experienced physicians can only be explained by outside pressure. And such pressure did exist. As is known, the question of the illness of M.V. Frunze was discussed even at the Politburo and precisely Stalin and Voroshilov had insisted on the operation.

In his letter to his wife, M.V. Frunze somewhat acted against his conscience as he was not satisfied with the decision of the two consultants. The very brave military leader was in a rather difficult situation. To refuse the operation would mean to call down accusations of fear and indecisiveness on himself and he agreed reluctantly. This is confirmed by the recollections of the Old Bolshevik and personal friend of Mikhail Vasilyevich, I.K. Gamburg and which were published in 1965. "Not long before the operation," wrote Gamburg, "I went to see him. He was upset and said that he did not want to have the operation.... A presentiment of some misfortune, something irrectifiable suppressed him...."

"I tried to persuade Mikhail Vasilyevich to refuse the operation since the notion of it depressed him. But he shook his head saying:

"Stalin insists on the operation; he says that I must get rid of the stomach ulcer once and for all. I have decided to go under the knife'."2

The operation was held during the day of 29 October. As an anesthetic they employed chloroform, although even then a more effective agent was known, ether. According

to the evidence of Gamburg, Frunze had trouble falling asleep as the anesthetic had little effect on him. Prof Rozanov who was in charge of the operation took a decision to almost double the chloroform dose and this was extremely dangerous for the heart. The question involuntarily arises: why was such a risk necessary?

The operation began at 1240 hours and it was immediately clear that it was totally unnecessary. The surgeons did not discover any ulcers, only a small scar on the duodenum showed where it had once been. However, the increased dose of the anesthetic was intolerable for the heart of M.V. Frunze and the condition of the patient sharply deteriorated. At 1700 hours in the evening, that is, after the operation, Stalin and Mikoyan arrived at the hospital but were not allowed to see the patient on the ward. Stalin gave Frunze a note: "Friend! I was here tonight at 1700 hours and [Mikoyan and I] were with Comrade Rozanov. We wanted to visit you but we were not permitted because of the ulcer. We were forced to bow to superior force. Don't be bored, my pet. Greetings. We will come again, we will come again.... Koba."³ But neither Stalin nor Mikoyan were to see Mikhail Vasilyevich alive. Some 30 hours after the operation, M.V. Frunze's heart ceased beating.

On 1 November 1925, PRAVDA published a government announcement: "During the night of 31 October, the Chairman of the USSR RVS, Mikhail Vasilyevich Frunze, died from a heart attack after an operation." On the same day, the newspapers published also an "Anatomical Diagnosis" which, in particular, stated: "Healed circular duodenal ulcer with sharply expressed scar indurations.... Superficial ulcerations of varying age on the exitus of the stomach and the superior part of the duodenum.... Acute suppurative peritonitis. Parenchymal myodegeneration of the heart, kidneys and liver...."⁴ PRAVDA contained a rather gloomy "conclusion" about the illness. "The ailment of M.V. Frunze," it stated, "as was shown by the autopsy, consisted, on the one hand, in the presence of a healed circular duodenal ulcer which had been subjected to scarring and which entailed the development of scar proliferation.... On the other hand, as a consequence of a previous operation in 1916 for the removal of a vermiform process, there was an old inflammatory process of the abdominal cavity. The operation undertaken on 29 October 1925 for a duodenal ulcer caused an exacerbation of the present chronic inflammatory process and this entailed a rapid decline in heart activity and death. The underdevelopment detected in the autopsy of the aorta and arteries as well as the surviving thyroid are the basis for assuming the weakness of the organism for the anesthetic and in the sense of its poor resistance to infection."

On 3 November 1925, PRAVDA published several articles devoted to the memory of M.V. Frunze. ("Can we blame a poor heart" wrote, for example, Mikh. Koltsov, "for surrendering to 60 gm of chloroform after it had survived 2 years of the death penalty and the hangman's noose on his neck.") Here also was published an official

article "On the History of the Illness of Comrade Frunze" and which stated: "Due to the interest which the question of the history of the illness of Comrade Frunze represents for the comrades...the editors have decided to promptly print the following document." Then followed the minutes of two consultations by the bed of M.V. Frunze and the conclusion about the operation. It, in particular, stated: "On 29 October...Comrade M.V. Frunze at the Botkin Hospital underwent an operation by Prof V.N. Rozanov with the participation of Prof I. Grekov, Prof. A. Martynov and Doctor A.D. Ochkin.... The operation carried out under a general anesthetic lasted 35 minutes. In an autopsy on the abdominal cavity...they discovered...diffuse induration of the pylorus and a small scar at the beginning of the duodenum, obviously at the site of a healed ulcer.... The patient had difficulty falling asleep and remained under the anesthetic for 1 hour and 5 minutes."

It would be to the point to give here one other document, the record of the complete conversation without any contradictory and obscure arguments with Prof Grekov and published in IZVESTIYA on 3 November.

"The last consultation was on 23 October," stated Grekov. "All details of this meeting were described to Comrade Frunze and the operation was proposed to him. Regardless that the possibility of a bad outcome was not concealed from Comrade Frunze, he still wanted to undergo the operation, as he considered his condition as depriving him of the possibility of continuing responsible work. Comrade Frunze merely asked that the operation be carried out as soon as possible.

"After the operation, poor cardiac activity caused concern....

"Naturally, no one was allowed to see the patient but when Comrade Frunze was informed that Comrade Stalin had sent him a note, he asked that this note be read and smiled happily.... The operation cannot be considered among the major one. It was conducted according to all rules of surgical art and the grievous outcome would be completely inexplicable if one did not weigh the data obtained during the operation and in the autopsy. Clearly in the organism of the deceased...there were particular features which caused the sad outcome." It went on to state that the revolution and war had weakened Frunze's organism. "Involuntarily the question arises," Grekov completed his conversation, "could we have dispensed with the operation. All the changes which were discovered in the operation bespeak, undoubtedly, in favor of the view that Comrade Frunze without the operation was incurable and even was under the threat of inevitable and possibly sudden death."

The circumstances related to the unexpected death of M.V. Frunze as well as the extremely confused explanations by the physicians caused perplexity in broad party circles. The Ivanovo-Voznesenskiy communists even

demanding that a special committee be set up for investigating the cause of death. In mid-November 1925, under the chairmanship of N.I. Podvoyskiy, there was a session held of the Board of the Old Bolsheviks Society on this issue. Summoned to it for a report was the People's Commissar of Public Health N.A. Semashko. From his report and from answers to the questions it became clear that neither the physician in charge nor Prof V.N. Rozanov had pushed for the operation and that many participants in the consultation had not been completely competent on illnesses of such sort. Everything had been channeled not through the People's Commissariat of Public Health but through the Medical Commission of the Central Committee which was headed by persons for whom Semashko showed great disapproval. It was also learned that before the consultation V.N. Rozanov had been summoned to see Stalin and Zinovyev and that even during the operation the threat of death on the operating table had arisen from the too high dose of anesthetic. Emergency measures had to be undertaken. After the death of M.V. Frunze, Prof Rozanov fell so ill that the chairman of the USSR SNK [Council of People's Commissars] A. Rykov went to see him in order to calm him down and state that no one was blaming him for the bad outcome of the operation. The Board of the Old Bolsheviks Society after discussing the causes of death of M.V. Frunze adopted a decision on the disgraceful attitude toward the Old Bolsheviks. It was decided to inform the party congress of this decision.

At the 14th VKP(b) Congress in December 1925, the question of the death of M.V. Frunze was not discussed. However, in the 5th issue of the journal NOVYY MIR in 1926, the "tale of the unextinguished moon" by B. Pilnyak was published. In the foreword to it it was stated: "The plot of this story leads one to believe that the reason for the writing of it and the material were the death of M.V. Frunze. I personally had virtually no knowledge of Frunze, I was scarcely acquainted with him, and I saw him just a couple of times.... I find it essential to inform the reader of all of this so that the reader does not seek out false facts in it or living persons." However, in actuality the tale did deal with the death of M.V. Frunze and B. Pilnyak showed a good knowledge of all the circumstances related to the operation and death. It was no surprise that the entire run of the journal with the story by Pilnyak was confiscated. Only several issues survive by accident and these now represent an enormous bibliographic rarity. In the very next issue of NOVYY MIR, the editors admitted that the publishing of Pilnyak's story had been a "obvious and major error." I do not know whether the story appeared in the emigre or Western press at the end of the 1920s, however in 1965, the Phlegan Press in London published it in Russian under the title "The Death of an Army Commander."

The son of V. Antonov-Ovseyenko, the historian A. Antonov-Ovseyenko, did not doubt that the death of Frunze as a result of the operation was a "political action of elimination" which had been organized by Stalin.⁵

The American historian and Sovietologist A. Ulam in his book on Stalin argues decisively against this version. He feels that the entire matter lay in the extremely poor state of medical services in the USSR in 1925. A. Ulam recalls that even in the time of Lenin, there was the practice of the intervention of party authorities into medical affairs and many party leaders were forcibly prescribed rest or treatment. Hence, the Politburo decision on the operation which Frunze had to undergo was not something unusual. The tale by Pilnyak was considered by A. Ulam an undoubted slander which "Pilnyak undertook under the influence of someone who wanted to attack Stalin.... It is worthy of note," wrote Ulam, "that there were no consequences either for Pilnyak or for the editor at that time. Be it out of disregard for the lie or out of calculated restraint, and possibly, both, Stalin preferred not to respond to the slander which even in a democratic society would have provided sufficient grounds for the criminal court prosecution of its author and publisher."⁶

A. Ulam, of course, is not correct when he writes about Stalin's "disdain" for lies. Medical services in the USSR in 1925 were actually organized very poorly but not for the very top leaders of the nation. When the question arose of their health, the best doctors were called in, including physicians and consultants from Germany. The Politburo was concerned for the health of the VKP(b) Central Committee members, in calling in physicians and medicines or directing Soviet leaders to the best clinics in Switzerland and Germany and to resorts in Western countries. But the Politburo never insisted on one or another method of treatment, let alone on operations so that in this regard the case of M.V. Frunze was precisely an exception and a very strange one in its persistence. To take any measures of reprimand against Pilnyak or the editor of the journal for Stalin would have merely meant to draw excessive attention to this question. Nor could there be any question of a democratic court on the issue of the "slander" as such a court could bring out details in the treatment of M.V. Frunze which they would rather forget. Stalin settled up with Pilnyak later on. As soon as the "great terror" of 1937-1938 began, Pilnyak was one of the first to be arrested and died in prison or was immediately executed.

In speaking on 3 November 1925 at the funeral of M.V. Frunze, Stalin said: "Possibly this is precisely what we need with the old comrades descending so easily and simply into the grave."⁷

Certainly this was not necessary either for the people or for the party. But this was very important for Stalin as instead of M.V. Frunze the post of people's commissar for military and naval affairs was filled by K.Ye. Voroshilov who, although he did have definite accomplishments to the party and the revolution, possessed neither the intellect, the military boldness nor the authority of Frunze but on the other hand was under the strong influence of Stalin even since the fighting at Tsaritsyn.

It must be pointed out that quite recently the popular social-literary journal ZNAMYA published the "Tale of an Unextinguished Moon" by B. Pilnyak. In the editorial foreword to this publication, one can read: "The reason for the public scandal which arose in the summer of 1926 around the tale consisted not only in the fact that there was a large degree of authenticity to it...the history of the illness and sudden death of Mikhail Vasilyevich Frunze on the operating table was described. (Ostensibly designed to repudiate this circumstance, the Foreword of the author actually intensified the suspicion of a real life incident than it reduced this.) The main—and unmentioned—reason for the sharp criticism of the story by B. Pilnyak was the fact that the author saw the indirect guilty party of the tragedy which occurred in the figure of the 'unbent man' who pushed the army commander against his will into the fatal operation...."

"Thus, the author clearly had grounds for his interpretation of the tragic events which occurred in 1925. The basic idea of this small tale was directed against political intriguing which later developed into the mass repressions of 1937 and which involved primarily the old Leninist Guard of Bolsheviks. The life of the tale's author also came to an end in that year."⁸

I can only agree with these words.

In July 1926, F.E. Dzerzhinskiy also died suddenly, without reaching the age of 50. The acuteness of the internal party disputes weighed heavily on Feliks Edmundovich: he did not share the platform of Zinovyev and Kamanev, but several times came out decisively against the harsh methods of Stalin employed by him in politics. The party, it seemed to Dzerzhinskiy, was heading toward a split and the experiences related to this prospect accelerated his demise.

The death of Dzerzhinskiy for a short period of time united all groups in the party. According to the evidence of M.P. Yakubovich who participated in the memorial ceremony for the "knight of the revolution," the coffin with Dzerzhinskiy's body was carried onto Red Square jointly by Stalin, Trotskiy, Zinovyev, Kamenev, Bukharin and Rykov. This was, in essence, the last act of party solidarity over the coffin of the party favorite and its hero. For precisely in the summer of 1926, the internal party struggle in the VKP(b) resumed with new strength and took a particularly abrupt turn. As for the position of chairman of the USSR OGPU, it was filled by V.R. Menzhinskiy, one of the most prominent associates of F.E. Dzerzhinskiy. With all his abilities, he was unable, however, to replace his predecessor in such a responsible post. Menzhinskiy did not have particularly great authority and influence in the party. In 1926, he was not even a member of the VKP(b) Central Committee. Moreover, Menzhinskiy was often ill and for this reason was little involved in the affairs of the OGPU. The OGPU deputy chairman began to play an ever-greater role and among them G. Yagoda began to move rapidly into first place with support by Stalin. Thus, both

the army and the public security bodies in 1927-1928 came under the control of Stalin and this gave him a decisive predominance over the other members of the VKP(b) Politburo.

Footnotes

1. See: S. Sirotinskiy, "The Last Days," KRASNAYA ZVEZDA, 31 October 1930.
2. I.K. Gamburg, "Tak eto bylo..." [As It Was...], Moscow, Politizdat, 1965, pp 181-182.
3. See the article by S. Sirotinskiy.
4. It was perfectly obvious that before the operation Frunze had neither acute suppurative peritonitis since from the evidence of himself and his friends he felt completely healthy and fit for work. The acute peritonitis was undoubtedly the main cause of death and was one of the consequences of the operation during which an infection was introduced into the abdominal cavity of the patient. Postoperative peritonitis usually developed very quickly within 24 hours and in 1925 they were still unable to combat this. As for the myodegeneration of the heart, kidneys and liver, all of this was the result of the increased chloroform dose administered to the organism. Any medical reference points out that chloroform is a high toxic substance causing a disruption of the heart rhythm, dystrophic changes in the myocardium, fatty degeneration, cirrhosis and atrophy of the liver. It also disrupts metabolism, in particular carbohydrate metabolism.
5. A. Antonov-Ovseyenko, "Portret tirana" [Portrait of a Tyrant], New York, 1980, p 68.
6. Adam B. Ulam, "Stalin," New York, The Viking Press, 1973, pp 259-261.
7. I.V. Stalin, "Sochineniya" [Works], Moscow, Gospolitizdat, Vol 7, 1954, pp 250-251.
8. ZNAMYA, No 12, 1987, p 105.

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[Article, published under the heading "In Search for the Truth," prepared by Col V.P. Krikunov, editor for the problems of the history of strategy and operational art: "The Frontline Veterans Replied Thus!; Five Questions of the General Staff"]

[Text] At the end of the 1940s and in the first half of the 1950s, the Military Scientific Directorate (Chief, Col Gen A.P. Pokrovskiy) of the General Staff of the USSR

Armed Forces generalized the experience of the concentration and deployment of the troops in the Western border military districts following the 1941 plan for the cover of the state frontier on the eve of the Great Patriotic War.

For this purpose, five questions were asked of the participants in the designated events and who in the initial period held various positions in the troops of the military districts. These questions were:

1. Were the troops informed within the areas of concern to them of the plan for the defense of the state frontier; what was done and when by the command and staffs to ensure the execution of this plan?
2. As of what time and on the basis of what orders did the cover troops begin to move up to the state frontier and what number of them had been deployed before the start of hostilities?
3. When were orders received to bring the troops to combat alert in line with the expected attack by Nazi Germany in the morning of 22 June; what instructions were issued and when to carry out these orders and what was done by the troops?
4. Why was a larger portion of the artillery in the training camps?
5. How many staffs were ready for troop command and to what degree did this reflect on the course of conducting operations in the first days of the war?

We offer to the readers the replies to the given questions and they, in our view, are of definite interest in line with the debate continuing on the journal's pages concerning the initial period of the last war.

* * *

The first question was answered as follows by the former commanders and chiefs of the Baltic Special Military District (PribOVO):

Lt Gen P.P. Sobennikov (former commander of the 8th Army). I was appointed commander in March 1941. The position obliged me above all to become familiar with the plan for the defense of the state frontier in the aim of elucidating the army's place and role in the overall plan. But, unfortunately, neither at the General Staff nor upon arrival at the staff of the PribOVO in Riga was I informed of the presence of such a plan. I did not find any instructions on this question in the documents of the army staff located in Yelgava.

I have the impression that at that time (March 1941) such a plan scarcely existed. Only on 28 May 1941 was I summoned together with the chief of staff, Maj Gen G.A. Larionov and the military council member, Div Commissar S.I. Shebalov to the district staff, where the

commander, Col Gen F.I. Kuznetsov, hurriedly acquainted us with the defensive plan. Here on the same day I met with the commanders of the 11th and 27th Armies, Lt Gen V.I. Morozov and Maj Gen N.E. Berzarin, as well as with the chiefs of staff and the military council members of these armies.

The district commander received us each individually and obviously gave analogous instructions to quickly become acquainted with the defensive plan, to adopt and report the decision to him.

All of this was carried out in great haste and in a somewhat nervous situation. The plan was received for familiarization and study by the chiefs of staff. It was a rather bulky, thick typewritten notebook.

After approximately 1.5-2 hours from receiving the plan, having still not been able to study it fully, I was summoned to Col Gen F.I. Kuznetsov and who received me in a darkened room and confidentially dictated my decision. The latter came down to concentrating the main efforts on the sectors of Shyaulay, Tauraga (125th and 90th Rifle Divisions) and covering the frontier from the Baltic Sea (Palanga) on a front of around 80 km using the 10th Rifle Division of the XI Rifle Corps.

The 48th Rifle Division by the start of the war was to be moved to the army left flank and increase the defensive front to the left of the 125th Rifle Division (which was covering the main sector of Shyaulay, Tauraga) to the Neman River at the town of Yurbarkas (the army's left frontier).

The XII Mechanized Corps was to be moved up to an area to the north of Shyaulay in the army second echelon and I was not granted the right to issue it orders. In actuality, as was later confirmed, during the first days of the war, the corps was under the front commander.

The commander of the 11th Army was in a similar position to me and he had been the first to be received by Col Gen Kuznetsov.

My notes as well as those of the chief of staff were approved. We received orders to leave for our station. Here we were promised that the instructions for compiling the defensive plan and our work notebooks would be immediately forwarded to the army staff. Unfortunately, we did not receive any orders and even our work notebooks.

Thus, the defensive plan was not issued to the troops. However, the formations stationed on the frontier (the 10th, 125th and from the spring of 1941 also the 90th Rifle Divisions) were engaged in preparing field fortifications on the frontier in the area of the fortified areas [UR] under construction (Telkshay and Shyaulay) and

had been given practical instructions as to their tasks and defensive sectors. Possible versions of action were played through during field trips (April-May 1941) as well as in troop exercises.

(Date of compiling document absent.—V.K.)

Lt Gen V.I. Morozov (former commander of the 11th Army). As is known, in 1940 they had begun the organization and construction of the fortified areas. The divisional commanders were involved in reconnoitering those areas on which they would fight.

Fortifications were built by the divisions in their defensive zones. For this reason the regimental and battalion commanders knew them well. Moreover, in the field exercises were conducted repeatedly with the staffs of the corps, divisions and regiments. Their subject and nature derived from the playing out of versions of actions in the event of war.

(Date of compiling document absent.—V.K.)

Lt Gen I.P. Shlemin (former chief of staff of the 11th Army). I did not see any document which set out the tasks of the 11th Army. In the spring of 1941, the district staff held an operations game where each of the participants performed the duties according to the position held. I feel that at this exercise the main questions of the plan for defending the state frontier were studied. After this, the defensive lines were studied by the divisional commanders and their staffs (5th, 33d and 29th Rifle Divisions) in the field. The basic requirements for readying the lines were issued to the troops. A reconnoitering of the terrain was carried out with the divisional and regimental staffs in the aim of selecting the defensive lines and organizing them. I feel that these decisions were issued to the subordinate commanders and staffs. They also readied the defenses with their forces.

16 May 1952

Col Gen M.S. Shumilov (former commander of the XI Rifle Corps of the 8th Army). The plan for the defense of the state frontier was not issued to the staff or to me. For the corps they planned the carrying out of individual tasks relating to field works in the new fortified area under construction and in the zone of the proposed forward security area. This work had not been fully completed by the start of the war and for this reason obviously a decision was taken for the corps to take up the defensive along the eastern bank of the Yura River, that is, along the line of the fortified area under construction and only one company per regiment was ordered to remain in the trenches of the forward security area.

(Date of compiling document absent.—V.K.)

Maj Gen I.I. Fadeyev (former commander of the 10th Rifle Division of the XI Rifle Corps of the 8th Army). I knew of the plan for the defense of the Lithuanian state

frontier in the zone of my division and the lefthand adjacent unit, the 125th Rifle Division. The staffs of the division and the regiments worked out combat documents, orders, instructions, maps, diagrams and so forth. The formation units were drilled in occupying the defensive areas and firing emplacements in their positions.

The rifle regiments were reinforced with forces at my disposal. Basic attention was concentrated on the sector of Kretinga, Plungi and along the Baltic Seacoast to Libau, as well as Klaypeda, Retovas. All the artillery was to be employed here. The documentation and several firing positions had been readied for it.

The terrain of the entire defensive sector of the division had been well studied as well as the nearest approaches for taking up defensive positions and weapons emplacements down to the platoon commander inclusively; main and alternate command and observation posts were organized from the divisional staff down to the company commanders, inclusively.

8 April 1953

* * *

Former commanders and superiors of the Western Special Military District (ZapOVO) replied as follows.

Maj Gen P.I. Lyapin (former chief of staff of the 10th Army). Upon receipt of the district directives for defending the state frontier in January 1941, Army Commander Maj Gen K.D. Golubev adopted a decision. The I Rifle Corps with units of the 8th Rifle Division was to defend the sector of the state frontier from the demarcation line on the right to the Narev River at Novogrudok. The 2d Rifle Division with one reinforced regiment was to support the boundary with the adjacent unit on the right, having moved it up to the line of Losevo (15 km to the northwest of Osovets). The remaining forces of the 2d Rifle Division were in the second echelon and were to defend Osovets Fortress with the Ganendz fortifications.

The V Rifle Corps reinforced by two army artillery regiments was ordered to cover the remaining portion of the army defensive zone from Novogrudok to Zuzel, having both divisions in the first echelon.

The operational reserves were to be concentrated as follows: the VI Cavalry Corps in the area of Strenkova Gura, Mezhnin, Kanitse; the VI Mechanized Corps in the forests to the west of Belostok. The task for the corps was given by the ZapOVO commander.

Thus, the defensive zone of the 10th Army (145 km wide) was covered in the first echelon only by three rifle divisions, and on terrain accessible for actions by all enemy arms on any sector. Under these conditions, the corps and divisional commanders were unable to organize reserves. The army commander did not have the right to employ his own reserves without permission

from above. For this reason the entire system of defending the state frontier was unstable and without a planned maneuver of forces from the interior and along the front.

The directive did not give any guidelines on adjacent units and their tasks. In planning the army's actions in the event of war, we were concerned by the significant number of unanswered questions, for example, in using the mobile formations stationed in the army's zone; the fortified areas under construction. (We saw) the discrepancy in the position of the 86th and partially the 13th Rifle Divisions; on the left flank it remained unknown where which adjacent army would go over to the defensive.

The 1941 plan for the defense of the state frontier was reworked repeatedly by us from January until the very start of the war and had not been completed. The last change in the district operational directive was received by me on 14 May in Minsk. This ordered that by 20 May the working out of the plan was to be completed and it was to be submitted for approval to the staff of the OVO. On 20 May I reported: "The plan is ready, and approval is required by the district commander in order to begin working out the executing documents." But the summons did not come before the start of the war. Moreover, the last report of May (indicates that) in the army many training measures have been carried out such as field trips, procedural assemblies of the command personnel and so forth. For this reason no one could set to work on working out the executing documents for the plan of defending the state frontier. Moreover, my deputy for the rear services at the beginning of June brought a new directive on logistic support and this required a significant reworking of the entire plan.

However, by this time, the divisional commanders in the event of the war had the following documents for the defense of the state frontier:

- a) A plan for alerting the troops and the procedure for concentrating them in the assembly area;
- b) A plan for the combat and logistic support of the troops;
- c) A diagram for the defense of the state frontier for each division indicating tasks down to the battalion, inclusively;
- d) A diagram of army communications with the corps and divisions.

The availability of these documents completely ensured the carrying out of the set tasks by the formations. However, all the orders of the ZapOVO Staff were aimed at creating a good situation in the minds of subordinates. The dawdling in approving the plan worked out by us for the defense of the state frontier, on the one hand, and the obvious preparations of the enemy for decisive actions

about which we were kept fully informed by the intelligence bodies, on the other, completely disoriented us and inclined us not to give serious importance to the developing situation.

(Date of compiling document absent.—V.K.)

Col Gen L.M. Sandalov (former chief of staff of the 4th Army). In April 1941, the commander of the 4th Army received from the ZapOVO Staff a directive according to which we were to work out a plan of cover for mobilization, concentration and deployment of the troops on the Brest sector. This pointed out that "in the aim of covering the mobilization, concentration and deployment of the troops, the entire district territory is to be split up into army cover areas..." In accord with the district directive, an army cover plan was worked out. In assessing it, it must be pointed out that it corresponded to the district directive which, in essence, had already settled for the army all the main questions: it gave the allocating of forces for the cover area, their place of concentration upon the combat alert, the times required for alerting the troops, the tasks and procedure for carrying them out and, consequently, the mistakes in the decision of the district command for providing the cover were automatically transferred into the army plan.

The main shortcoming of the district and army plans was their unrealisticness. A significant portion of the troops assigned for carrying out cover tasks still did not exist. For example, the 13th Army which was given the task of creating a cover area between the 10th and 4th Armies and the XIV Mechanized Corps which was to be part of the 4th Army were in the stage of organization. The arrival of certain formations in new areas in the event of the outbreak of a military conflict was set for a time when they would be unable to participate in carrying out cover tasks (the 100th Rifle Division with an arrival time of M-3). Such planning for the concentration of the troops by the frontier was doomed to failure from the start. And this is what happened. A division for the 4th Army did not arrive on the third day of the war or later.

A major shortcoming of the district and army cover plans was also the fact that they made no provision for organizing rear front and army defensive zones. The construction of them was to be started with the outbreak of hostilities while the reconnoitering of the lines and the drawing up of a work plan would be done during a field trip in July 1941.

(Date of compiling document absent.—V.K.)

Col Gen V.S. Popov (former commander of XXVIII Rifle Corps of 4th Army). A plan for the defense of the state frontier was not issued to me as the commander of the XXVIII Rifle Corps.

10 March 1953

Maj Gen M.A. Zashivalov (former commander of the 86th Rifle Division of the 10th Army). By 1 May 1941, the division's defensive zone which we had begun creating from August 1940 had been organized. In the second half of May, the chief of staff and I were summoned to the headquarters of the 10th Army. There the chief of staff, Maj Gen P.I. Lyapin, issued us the decision of the commander to build and organize a new divisional defensive zone. Before 1 June, we were ordered to conduct reconnaissance of the regimental sectors and battalion defensive areas, the artillery firing positions, the command and observation posts. The plan of defensive works had to be reported through our commander of the V Rifle Corps by 5 June and all the work, according to it, had to be complete by 1 August 1941.

A plan for defensive works was approved. Upon the grounds of the decision taken by me, the divisional staff worked out an order and a timing coordination table for conducting defensive combat in the new zone.

Plans for combat alert were worked out for all the division's units and they were stored in the commanders' safes in sealed envelopes. They were to be opened only upon the agreed-upon signal. The commanders of the rifle and artillery regiments, the separate battalions and battalions knew their tasks and in accord with this worked out decisions and operational orders for defending the state frontier.

(Date of compiling document absent.—V.K.)

Col S.I. Gurov (former chief of staff of the 49th Rifle Division of the XXVIII Rifle Corps of the 4th Army). At the end of March or the beginning of April, the divisional commander and I were summoned to the staff of the 4th Army. There a decision had been finally taken, a plan had been drawn up and an operational order written out for the units to defend the division's sector. All the documents were put into envelopes sealed with the seal of the army staff and subsequently brought to the division's staff where they were kept in my safe along with the "Red Packet."

We were unable to organize a fire plan for the defense of the division considering the fire of the fortified area as the UR Staff refused to issue these data, saying that the ZapOVO Staff had prohibited the giving out of any information on these questions.

(Date of compiling document absent.—V.K.)

Col A.S. Kislitsyn (former chief of staff of the 22d Tank Divisions of the XIV Mechanized Corps). In approximately March-April 1941, the divisional commander, myself and the chiefs of the operations and signals departments were summoned to the staff of the 4th Army (Kobrin). Over a period of 2 or 3 days, we worked out a plan for the alerting of the division and this included such documents as an order for the march to

the concentration area, diagrams for radio and telephone communications, instructions to the divisional duty officer in the event of a combat alert. Reinforcing of the division was not planned.

It was categorically prohibited to acquaint even the commanders of the unit regiments and battalions with the contents of the elaborated documents. Moreover, the building of observation and command posts in the formation's concentration area was not permitted although the signal troops raised this question.

(Date of compiling document absent.—V.K.)

* * *

Of great interests are the recollections of the various levels of commanders who before the war and at its outset served in the Kiev Special Military District (KOVO).

Army Gen M.A. Purkayev (former chief of staff of the KOVO). The plan for the defense of the state frontier was issued to the troops. It was worked out in April by the district chief of staff, by the operations section and by the army commanders and operations groups of their staffs. During the first 10 days of May, the army plans were approved by the district military council and turned over to the army staffs. The plans of the armies relating to the executing documents were worked out down to the formations.

The army commanders and chiefs of staff were acquainted with the documents of the formations on the army staffs and after this approximately before 1 June they were turned over for safekeeping in sealed packages to the chiefs of staff.

All the units and staff of the formations had plans for the alert. The plan for the defense of the state frontier was to be put into action upon a telegram from the district military council (over three signatures) and addressed to the army commanders and the commander of the cavalry corps (commander of the V Cavalry Corps, Maj Gen F.V. Kamkov.—V.K.). In the formations and units the plan of action was to be implemented from coded telegrams from the army military councils and the commander of the cavalry corps with the announcing of the alert.

29 August 1952

Army Gen I.Kh. Bagramyan (former chief of operations section of KOVO Staff). The plan for the defense of the state frontier was issued to the troops as concerned them in the following manner: the troops directly carrying out the cover...had well elaborated plans and documentation down to the regiment inclusively; the rest of the district troops (five rifle corps, seven mechanized corps which

were far from complete in organization and reinforcements)...had a sealed envelope stored in the safe of the corresponding formation chief of staff with an operational order and all instructions related to combat support of the set tasks.

The plan of use and the documentation were worked out in all details on the district staff only for the corps and divisions. The executors could learn of these only from the documents placed in sealed envelopes after the opening of the latter.

10 September 1952

Maj Gen Z.Z. Rogoznyy (former chief of staff of the XIII Rifle Corps). In approximately mid-May 1941, the 5th Army Staff worked out a plan for the cover of the state frontier.... Acquainted with this on the army staff were the following: the commander of the XV Rifle Corps, Col I.I. Fedyuninskiy and also the divisional commanders: Maj Gen G.I. Shertyuk, Col M.P. Timoshenko (respectively, commanders of the 45th and 62d Rifle Divisions.—V.K.). The staffs of the corps and the divisions did not have documents concerning the plan of defense but they knew the tasks and the particular plans of defense.... The divisions reconnoitered their own defensive zones, they set the battle orders and planned the organization of the command of battle.... Everything concerning the regiments was issued to them directly in the field and the adopted decisions were approved by the divisional commanders.

21 April 1953

Maj Gen G.I. Shertyuk (former commander of the 45th Rifle Divisions of the XV Rifle Corps). The plan for the defense of the state frontier on the part of the staffs of the XV Rifle Corps and the 5th Army was never issued by anyone to me as the commander of the 45th Rifle Division and (I) initiated the division's combat following a tentative plan worked out by me and the Chief of Staff, Col Chumakov and issued to the commanders of the units and battalions.

24 April 1953

Col P.A. Novikov (former chief of staff of the 62d Rifle Division of the XV Rifle Corps). It seems to me that there was no divisional plan for the defense of the state frontier and the divisional plan was part of the army one. The division had only an approximate zone along the front and in depth. Thus, during the first days of April 1941, I, as well as the chiefs of staff of the 87th and 45th Rifle Divisions, were summoned to the staff of the 5th Army where at the operations section we were given maps and in our own hand copied the organizing of our own zones in engineer terms from the army plan.

(Date of compiling document absent.—V.K.)

Maj Gen P.I. Abramidze (former commander of the 72d Mountain Rifle Division of the VIII Rifle Corps of the 26th Army). Prior to the attack by Nazi Germany on the Soviet Union, the unit commanders and I did not know the mobilizational plan (MP-4) and after it was opened everyone realized that all the defensive work on the state frontier and the command-staff exercises in the field proceeded from the general KOVO plan approved by the General Staff.

11 June 1953

Maj Gen P.V. Chernous (former chief of staff of the 72d Mountain Rifle Division of the VIII Rifle Corps of the 26th Army). The plan for the defense of the state frontier was issued to the division's units by the command of the VIII Rifle Corps. However, this had been compiled not according to the organization of a mountain rifle division but rather a rifle division. The problem was that in the spring of 1941, the division had begun to convert to the TOE of a mountain rifle division but these measures had not been completed by 22 June.

25 February 1955

Maj Gen S.F. Gorokhov (former chief of staff of the 99th Rifle Division of the VIII Rifle Corps of the 26th Army). The plan for the defense of the state frontier was received in February-March 1941 at the staff of the 26th Army in a sealed envelope and had not been worked out with us. But even before its receipt the army commander, Lt Gen F.Ya. Kostenko, informed the divisional commander, Col N.I. Dementyev, and myself personally of the demarcation lines for the defensive sector of the formation and the regiments, the locations of the command and observation posts and the artillery firing positions. In addition to this by a special order of the division a forward security area of the Peremyshl Fortified Area was to be prepared and trenches dug in our zone.

The staffs of the division and the border detachment worked out a plan for the cover of the state frontier in two versions—in the event of sabotage and a possible war.

16 March 1953

[Editorial Summation] An analysis of the recollections of the participants in combat during the initial period of the Great Patriotic War as well as other archival documents indicates that the appropriate operational plans and plans for the cover of the state frontier were worked out in the staffs of the districts in the event of a war. The cover plans in the districts in the spring of 1941 were adjusted twice: in March and in April. The reworking of the plans was caused by the change in the composition of the troops in the border districts in line with the arrival in them of a number of new formations from the interior of the nation.

A characteristic trait of the cover plans was that they proceeded from a variation of the start of a war and developing situation whereby it would be possible without hindrance by the probable enemy to move up to the frontier, to take up the designated cover zones, prepare to repel the attack and carry out mobilization. For this reason the field forces and formations of the districts were divided into two echelons: in the first were troops positioned close to the state frontier and comprising the cover echelons and in the second were those concentrated in depth.

The positions of the cover armies were located along the frontier and this increased their length. Here the main forces of the Western Special Military District were on the Belostok Salient and those of the Kiev District on the Lvov Salient and this created the threat of their envelopment by the enemy.

Judging from the recollections of the participants of those events, the army cover plans were worked out according to a single scheme. The cover areas were divided into sections allocated to the corps and semisections for the divisions. It was assumed that the basis of the defensive would be the rifle corps which with their divisions occupied subsections with the forward edge along the frontier. They were prepared in engineer terms (from each division two rifle battalions worked on the frontier and combat engineer subunits basically were involved in building the fortified areas) and upon the mobilization alert were to be occupied by the rifle divisions and reinforcements. The mechanized corps in each army were assigned to be used either as an army reserve or as a second echelon. Upon the alert they were to move up to the designated areas being ready to launch counterstrikes.

A particular feature of all the army cover plans was the absence in them of an assessment of possible enemy actions and above all a variation of the surprise going over to the offensive by superior enemy forces. The veterans recalled that in dealing with the representatives of the border detachment staffs, they learned about the threatening situation on the frontier several days before the start of the war. In a number of instances clandestine intelligence directly pointed not only to the arrival and deployment of a mass of enemy troops close to the frontier but also to preparations of the territory for the start of hostilities (the occupying of artillery firing positions, the moving of inhabitants from the border zone the laying out of shells on the ground and so forth).

The cover plans merely mentioned about cooperation with the border troops and the troops of the UR that with the start of mobilization they would go under the command of the appropriate formations. Such important questions of cooperation as the destruction of bridges on rivers close to the frontier were forgotten. In many instances the enemy troops succeeded in capturing them in tact.

Consequently, the cover plan in essence was a plan of defense whereby everything was subordinate to the idea of such a configuration of the battle formation which would provide the opportunity to deploy quickly and conveniently in the previously prepared positions in order to employ primarily the might of our fire and the advantageous terrain conditions.

The orientation of our officers in terms of the nature of the forthcoming combat proceeded from the overall task of the cover plan, that is, "covering the state frontier." The essence of tactical maneuvering came down to assembling quickly and reaching the frontier having neither data about the enemy nor about our own march formation. It was assumed that in the concentration areas time would be provided for final preparations for battle.

Moreover, the recollections show, it seems to us, the absence of a strict system for planning the cover of the state frontier by the General Staff down to the regiments, inclusively. While in the field forces and formations of the KOVO, the plans were basically worked out down to the division and lower; in the troops and staff of the ZapOVO, this clearly was not done.

In the replies of virtually all those questioned on the first question one feels a mistrust of the superior commanders and staffs for the inferior ones. The "bans" on a knowledge of the tasks to defend the state frontier played a negative role during the first days of the war. And if one considers the primitive system for warning the troops, then this was, in our view, the main reason for the loss of many subunits, units and formations on 22 June 1941.

A number of other facts must also be put among the shortcomings of planning and organizing the cover of the state frontier. For example, according to the report of the former Chief of Staff of the 22d Tank Division, Col A.S. Kislitsyn, 2 weeks before the war from the staff of the 4th Army they received top secret instructions and orders on removing the unit of fire from the tanks and storing this at the NZ [emergency reserve] dump.¹ And certainly the division was stationed in Brest, that is, directly on the frontier. Or as was recalled by the former Chief of Staff of the 10th Army, Maj Gen P.I. Lyapin, the army troops were to occupy and at whatever the cost defend the zone of the forward security area running 4-15 km to the west of the forward defensive edge of both UR while the directive said nothing as to who was to occupy the UR and how. "The very fortified areas," he pointed out later, "had just one or two battalions and they lacked the strength even to guard the already built structures and not only conduct defensive combat in them. Our urgent attempts to obtain an explanation on this question from the district staff were unsuccessful."²

An even more terrible admission was made by the Commander of the 212th Rifle Regiment of the 49th Rifle Division in the XXVIII Rifle Corps of the 4th Army of the ZapOVO, Lt Col (Res) N.I. Kovalenko:

"Approximately 2 or 3 weeks before the start of the attack...the rifle units received a telegram that in certain sectors (gates) German air squadrons would be flying over and these were not to be fired on. On a day off at that time I...personally saw at the officers club about 15 German pilots who (then) wandered freely through the city and studied our objectives for firing as they could have no other purpose. Such a situation existed not only in Belostok but also in other cities of Western Belorussia."³

The total of the given circumstances, in our view, led to the severe consequences of the initial period of the Great Patriotic War. The aggressor with superior forces on selected axes went over to the offensive. The Soviet formations called up on the alert under air and artillery strikes began to move up to their sectors for the defense of the state frontier. Under what conditions this occurred and how they acted were related by the participants of those already distant events, in answering the other questions.

Footnotes

1. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 15, inv. 977441, file 2, sheet 371.
2. Ibid., sheet 186.
3. Ibid., sheets 367, 368.

(To be continued)

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Autobiographic Resume of Repressed Officer
00010009i VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL
in Russian No 3, Mar 89 (signed to press 28 Feb 89)
pp 78-81

[Autobiography, published under the heading "The Age in Autobiographies," of Aleksandr Ignatyevich Sedyakin]

[Text] Aleksandr Ignatyevich Sedyakin (1893-1938) was a commander of the Red Army. He participated in World War I as a staff captain. Member of the CPSU from 1917. He joined the Red Army in January 1918. From March 1918, he was the chairman of the VRK [military-revolutionary committee] of the Novorozhevskiy Sector and organized the first Red Army units. In 1918-1920, he was the military commissar of a rifle division, he commanded an armored train and an infantry regiment and brigade, and was the assistant commander of a troop group, the military commissar of the front staff and chief of a number of rifle divisions. In suppressing the Kronshtadt Revolt in 1921 he was in command of the Southern Troop Group of the 7th Army and was awarded the Order of the Red Banner (1921). Prior to August 1921, he was the chief of the Kronshtadt Fortress garrison. In 1921-1922, he commanded the Karelian Region. For defeating the White

Finn bands for a second time he was awarded the Order of the Red Banner (1922). Subsequently, he held command posts as an army commander 2d rank. He perished during the years of the repressions.

1. I am the son of a worker. I completed surveying school in 1914. In school in Krasnoyarsk I was the leader of an illegal school mutual aid office and the editor of the illegal social-democratic magazine.

I completed the course of the school in the autumn of 1914.

2. I was called up under induction and signed for training to the Irkutsk Military School in November 1914.

I was appointed platoon commander in the 151st Pyatigorsk Infantry Regiment (near Dvinsk, Northern Front) in October 1915.

In this regiment I commanded a platoon, a company, a battalion and a machine gun team until the February Revolution.

I was considered an educated and brave officer in the regiment and, incidentally, they jokingly called me a social democrat.

I participated in three very bloody engagements in the areas of Dvinsk and Riga.

Five times I was caught on (barbed) wire. I was wounded twice.

3. In March 1917, I was elected the chairman of the regiment soldier committee and in May, the deputy chairman of the committee of soldier deputies of the 38th Infantry Division.

In August 1917, I joined the RSDRP(b) [Russian Social Democratic Workers Party (Bolshevik)] and was elected to the all-army conference of Bolsheviks and sympathizers by the secretary of the army RSDRP(b) committee of the 5th Army.

In August, September and October, together with Comrades Pozernyy and Sklyanskiy, I organized preparations for the revolt in the army.

In October, I was elected the deputy chairman of the army committee of the 5th Army.

4. During the night from 24 through 25 October, by telegram from Petrograd, the military-revolutionary committee of the 5th Army was established under my chairmanship.

By my telegram to the army, our Bolshevik commissars who had been previously readied came to power in the regiments, divisions and corps.

I carried out successful work with the commander of the 5th Army, Bondyrev. I placed over him the army commissar, the Bolshevik Sobakin.

On 29 October, my throat began to bleed; I was evacuated to Moscow and then on leave to Kurgan.

I recuperated and edited our party newspaper.

From the list of Bolshevik Social Democrats I was elected from the Northern Front a member of the Constituent Assembly. In January, I was at the Third Congress of Soviets and returned to the army by 15 January.

I was elected chairman of the army executive committee of the 5th Army.

I organized Red Army detachments and evacuated ammunition, money and supplies.

I led back in the best possible order the entire 5th Army with its weapons.

5. I organized a Red front against the Germans on the sector Opochka—Polotsk.

I organized two divisions there.

In a large district (as far as Rzhev) I suppressed anarchist-SR and kulak revolts.

I organized the provincial military commissariat in Velikiye Luki.

I was appointed military commissar of the 2d Pskov Rifle Division.

Simultaneously I was the chairman of the Velikiye Luki executive committee, the Sovnarkhoz [Council of the National Economy] and was the leader of the party organization.

6. Upon my personal request, I was sent to the Czechoslovak Front to the 1st Army (Tukhachevskiy).

I was in command of an armored train, a regiment and a brigade in the Simbirsk Iron Division (Gay).

Prior to this the regiment had been dissolute and demoralized and I turned it into the best regiment of the 1st Army (1st Kursk Soviet Regiment).

Veterans recall me even now (13th Mountain Rifle Regiment of the SAVO [Central Asian Military District]).

Discipline in the regiment was better than I saw in many regiments of our army in 1934-1935.

Men went into the enemy rear, without fearing for their own lives as they trusted me and I trusted them.

I commanded a brigade in the same way and my regiment was the best in it.

7. In November 1918, I was transferred to the Southern Front and appointed the assistant commander of the 13th Army.

The forces of the 13th Army were surprisingly low in terms of battleworthiness.

I did whatever necessary to collect the fleeing regiments and divisions and led them into battle.

It was the most difficult time. But here I underwent schooling in how one must make absolutely unbattleworthy troops (a mob!) into battleworthy ones.

8. After the retreat of the Southern Front in June 1919, I was appointed staff commissar of the Southern Front.

In August 1919, I was appointed the commander of the 3d Voronezh Separate Brigade.

The brigade was two-thirds made up of older men who were not battleworthy.

Some of the commanders were familiar and fighting men and with their aid I successfully strengthened one regiment (the 608th).

During a raid by Mamontov, I repulsed his attacks for 3 days.

When the senior chief fled, I assumed command, I assembled the troops and again led them into Voronezh.

9. In repelling Shkuro, I did not reach Voronezh. I, as the brigade commissar, again had to assume independent command over the remnants of the 8th Army and lead it to the south out of a complete encirclement.

In September 1919, virtually from nothing over a period of 10 days, I organized the 31st Rifle Division.

This division in the Makarovo area blocked the road of a cavalry corps of Gen Konovalov and then came out in the rear of two Don divisions in the area of Talovaya Station and routed them.

These actions by the 31st Rifle Division on the left flank of the 8th Army led to a general rapid retreat of the entire Don Army.

In the 31st Rifle Division there were 1,000 bayonets and 150 sabers with 13 guns.

I led the division in a single fist, with an echelon forward on the flank of the 8th Army along the line of Talovaya Station—
Buturlinovka—Pavlovsk—Kantemirovka—Luganskaya Station—Mityakinskaya Station.

To the south of Mityakinskaya in bloody fighting, the 31st Rifle Division stopped and repulsed two cavalry brigades from the corps of Gen Mamontov.

Then with the 31st Rifle Division I entered Rostov where I took over the 15th Rifle Division and with it defended the city against a counteroffensive by the volunteer corps of Gen Kutepov.

Then came the victorious campaign to Novorossiysk with the pursuit of the volunteer army and the capturing of much equipment and several thousand prisoners.

Up to then I had not even had a single defeat.

10. In May-June 1920, was the Novorossiysk—Kakhovka Campaign of the 15th Rifle Division.

In the area of Chernaya Dolina for the first time I suffered a defeat in fighting against Kutepov's corps.

But the forces were unequal and I was not sufficiently vigilant and circumspect.

I have remembered this lesson all my life.

And here also I felt the secret of the operational maneuver.

11. From August through December 1920, there was a break in my combat work for lack of discipline and failures in the fighting against Kutepov.

I commanded reserve brigades in Bryansk and Irkutsk from August through December 1920.

12. In February, I arrived in Leningrad to take over the 11th Rifle Division.

There was a long delay. The Kronshadt sailors had raised a revolt.

The commander of the Leningrad Military District Avrov on 3 March sent me to Oranienbaum to "look over" the 189th Brigade.

Having "taken a look," I decided to assume command myself. And little by little I organized the Southern Group of the 7th Army.

Then with the help initially of Comrade Lepse and later Kliment Yefremovich Voroshilov and delegates from the 10th VKP(b) Congress, I suppressed the revolt in the 27th Division and successfully stormed Kronshadt.

This was my first real operational success the roots of which were in the lessons of the defeat at Chernaya Dolina.

I was awarded the Order of the Red Banner.

13. In 1921, I rebuilt and reinforced Kronshadt Fortress as fortress commandant.

From August 1921 through September 1923, I was the commandant of the Petrograd Fortified Area and was the chief of the Petrograd Garrison. All these years I was a member of the Petrograd Soviet.

From November 1921 through March 1922, I successfully conducted the Karelian Operation.

This was a heroic saga of unstinting courage by our troops.

There is a small booklet for young people entitled "Kemas-ozero" [Lake Kemas]. The situation of the struggle in Karelia is described correctly and well there.

In honor of this successful operation, by an order of the RVSR [Republic Revolutionary Military Council], a combat insignia was struck.

I received a second Order of the Red Banner.

In the Karelian Operation, I underwent good schooling: strategic, operational and tactical.

From here came, incidentally, the skiers in the entire RKKA as well as the USSR.

In Karelia the strategic task was carried out by maneuvering in the enemy rears. Some 750 skiers (of them only 150 real ones) traveled 1,000 km along the frontier and everything was over for the White Karelians and Finns.

14. From November 1923 through March 1924, I was in command of the 5th Red Banner Far Eastern Army and was a member of the Far Eastern Revolutionary Committee.

Here within a month and without any hubbub I eliminated banditism and two White Guard revolts.

From March 1924 through March 1927, I was in command of the Volga Military District. During all these years, I was a member of the Samara Provincial Committee of the RKP(b) and the Provincial Executive Committee and during the last year a member of the Urals Oblast Executive Committee.

15. From the summer of 1926, there began a series of rapid moves. I became part of the Central Personnel of the Narkomvoenmor [People's Commissariat of Military and Naval Affairs].

As an infantry instructor, I carried out the presently existing system of combat training (as a whole).

I carried out and strengthened the system of winter troop training (skiing). I got machine gun training on its feet. I fought for strict discipline, for innovation, for lively leadership, and for an independent and enterprising commander and staff.

16. In 1931, the people's commissar admitted that it was time for me to change my job and for this I was very pleased.

From 1931 until half of 1932, I was the chief and commissar of the RKKA Military Technical Academy imeni Dzerzhinskiy, a member of the Buro of the Vyborg VKP(b) Raykom and a member of the Leningrad VKP(b) Gorkom.

At all the large plants of Leningrad, the old workers knew me well from Kronshadt, from Leningrad and Karelia as a fighting commander, a hero of the Civil War and they greeted me very warmly.

I plunged into the customary, familiar atmosphere as close to the heart of a Bolshevik and a commander.

The academy also greeted me warmly. Over the year I improved the academy in all regards.

I persuaded the trade union council to assume sponsorship of the academy and the major trade unions did the same for each faculty (there were five faculties in the academy).

This made it possible to sharply broaden and qualitatively improve the social authority of the academy and its vital link with industry, the party and worker community.

In 1932, the Military Technical Academy was split up into five special military academies.

I was able to prepare for this and train the cadres and instill good traditions in them.

17. In the autumn of 1932, I was appointed the chief of RKKA combat training.

It seems to me that this is the most difficult undertaking in the work of the central personnel.

I experienced many unpleasantnesses working almost alone over the new, most difficult questions of the tactics and methods of combat training. I completed the working out of the principles of modern tactics, the work methods of staffs and the methods of the tactical training of troops.

18. In the autumn of 1934, I was appointed deputy chief of the RKKA Staff and inspector of the RKKA higher military schools.

At present, I am working in this position.

In addition, I have been appointed the chairman of the All-Union Sports Shooting Committee of the VSFK [Higher Physical Culture Council] under the USSR TsIK [Central Executive Committee].

A. Sedyakin

28 April 1935

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Perestroyka in Soviet Military Science as Mirrored in Western Press

00010009j VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL
in Russian No 3, Mar 89 (signed to press 28 Feb 89)
pp 85-91

[Article by Captain 1st Rank V.P. Zimonin and Colonel A.I. Prikhodchenko (posthumous): "The Perestroyka of Soviet Military Science as Mirrored in the Western Press" The article commemorates the start of publication of THE JOURNAL OF MILITARY STUDIES in the United States and Great Britain]

[Text] Many, even nonmilitary journals in the West publish a large amount of material devoted to the problems of Soviet military history, military science, military doctrine and to the practices of Soviet military organizational development. Such close attention by Western researchers to military theory and practice in the USSR is no accident. It is a fact that in the United States and the other NATO countries, the Soviet Union and its partners in the Warsaw Pact are viewed as probable enemies. Western analysts have endeavored to link the past of our state with events of the current period, to trace the developmental patterns of Soviet military doctrine, to ascertain its roots, and assess the role and significance of Soviet military science in shaping the present structure of the Armed Forces. In carrying out the bidding of the Western military industrial circles, the NATO military theorists do not always depict objectively the problems of military organizational development in our country. The specter of the "Soviet military threat" is still present in their research.

However, perestroyka, the policy of glasnost and the agreements reached between the USSR and United States on medium- and shorter-range missiles have forced bourgeois military historians to take a new look at many problems. The contacts of military delegations, reciprocal inspections, the presence of one another at military exercises—all of this has contributed greatly to improving mutual understanding and to eroding the image of the enemy which for a long time was present both in the thoughts and works of the Western analysts.

Perestroyka in the USSR, the new political thinking which provided a powerful impetus for the development of Soviet military science not only caused a new wave of interest in the USSR and the military theory of our state but also posed completely different problems for the Western researchers. The previously existing biased approach did not provide an opportunity for bourgeois military science to disclose the reasons for the cause and the essence of the new political thinking and to assess objectively the state and prospects for the development of military affairs in the USSR. The Western military researchers David Glantz and Christopher Donnelly in assessing the current situation in the area of sovietological research, have pointed out: "In the West, there are various viewpoints on the question of the purpose of the Soviet military organization. Many feel that this organization represents the main threat to the interests and democratic values of the West and its constant presence has for all times perpetuated the dividing of the world into two fundamentally opposite military camps. Others assume that the gigantic military machine is simply a reality of the Russian and Soviet political system with an inflated police designed for ensuring the unity of the Soviet state and supervising allies but because of its striking frailty is in no measure a threat to the more developed West."²

Understandably under the new conditions such judgments seem, to put it mildly, strange. For this reason, Western researchers under the influence of the notion of new political thinking have begun to lean toward the idea of the need to change the approach to the designated problems, in establishing scientific cooperation with the Soviet scientists and making broader use of Soviet works. It has become clear that without an objective assessment of the state of Soviet military affairs it is impossible to form an adequate policy vis-a-vis the USSR and elaborate military doctrines.

Since the beginning of 1988, the United States and Great Britain have begun publishing THE JOURNAL OF SOVIET MILITARY STUDIES. This quarterly has as its goal, as was stated in the introductory article, not merely to thoroughly investigate the tenets of military affairs and the development of military thought in the USSR, but also to create good conditions for establishing cooperation with Soviet scientists in this area. The editorial board of the journal has also set for itself the task of studying carefully, in detail and objectively the Soviet military organization, military doctrine and military art in avoiding a narrowness of approach, one-sidedness and bias widespread among Western researchers as well as "compensate for the lack of knowledge of the Soviet military organization" and create a basis for evening out the "excessively extremist views" concerning the Soviet Armed Forces.

The journal's editors are the prominent Western military researchers David M. Glantz (United States) and Christopher Donnelly (Great Britain). The editorial board

includes many military theorists and historians working in military, military-scientific and certain civilian institutions in a number of Western countries.

As was pointed out, the journal is oriented at scientific workers, military theorists and the command personnel of the armed forces.

They plan to publish in it works of not only Western researchers. By agreement, materials will be reprinted from VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, VOPROSY ISTORII, VOYENNNYY VESTNIK and others as well as original articles by Soviet authors on problems of interest to the readers. The journal's editors have turned to Soviet colleagues with an invitation to participate in the work of the editorial board.

It is proposed that the material in the journal will be grouped in several sections (history and modern times; political, economic and social aspects; military theory, science and philosophy; military strategy; operational art; tactics; local wars; structure of the armed forces; documents, biographies; book reviews). Such a structure which should be flexible and in addition to those indicated include other important elements of military organizational development in the USSR, is capable, in the opinion of the editorial board, of satisfying reader interests and requests sufficiently completely.

An analysis of the articles published in the first issue of the journal indicates that the American and British researchers have focused attention on certain key problems of Soviet military theory and Soviet military organizational development. The main theme is the operation in depth which is viewed not only from the viewpoint of Soviet military theory and history but also from the viewpoint of military practice.

The articles by Bruce W. Menning "The Deep Strike in Russian and Soviet Military History" and Kerry L. Hines "Competing Concepts of Deep Operations"³ published in the sections "Military Theory" and "Operational Art" from historical positions examine the process of the forming of the concept of a deep operation and its content in various stages of the development of Russian and Soviet military theory. The first part of the article examines the question of employing cavalry formations as the main means of implementing deep strikes in the wars of Russia right until the 20th Century, and in particular in the Civil War. The author asserts that the concept of the deep strike due to the effect of spatial and time factors has maintained its force over a significant segment of Russian history.⁴ The second article analyzes the current state of the theory of the deep operation and traces how the operational-tactical views of the NATO Command, the experience of modern local wars as well as the appearance of new types of conventional weapons have influenced the approach of Soviet military theorists to shaping the content of the theory of the deep operation.

The present-day Soviet theory of deep operations, the article's author writes, envisages a rapid breaching of the forward defensive enemy lines, the disrupting of its actions in the rear and depriving the enemy of the possibility of reinforcing the first-echelon forces, the subsequent exploitation of the success of the breakthrough in the aim of encircling the enemy troops and their complete defeat. In conducting combat actions, Soviet commanders concentrate significant combat might in the second echelon and unite the organic and special reserve formations to ensure viability in the event of a change in the combat situation.

The article's author does not link the theory of a deep operation with the assertions by Western researchers and politicians on the "offensive nature" of Soviet military doctrine. Nevertheless, the material has been chosen by him in such a manner that such a conclusion is clearly implied. The article traces the relationship between the theory of a deep operation and the organizational structure of the Soviet Armed Forces.

"The Soviet concepts of conducting strategic, front and army operations require a significant number of strike forces, their complete cooperation and continuous rear support," writes K. Hines. Great attention is given to the measures of the Soviet Command to offset a checking of offensive operations. In carrying out a detailed analysis of these measures, in the article's conclusion, the author concludes that the Soviet Military Command is not fully aware of the particular features and nature of the threat of employing conventional weapons manufactured by the most advanced technology and which the Command might encounter in the mid-1990s.⁵

Such a comment is extremely important, since the experience of local wars is not always considered and where the most advanced weapons and new tactical procedures are employed.

The article "Sustaining Theater Strategic Operations"⁶ (author, Graham H. Turbiville, Jr.), regardless of the fact that as a whole it is devoted to the questions of organizing rear support for the Soviet troops, in a way develops research on the deep operations.

The statement made at the beginning of the 1980s by MSU N.V. Ogarkov that the basic type of combat operations in a future war would be a "strategic operation in a theater of military operations," the author writes, evoked great interest among the Western military specialists. In examining the organization of rear support for the operations conducted by the Soviet Army in World War II, and particularly the Manchurian one, the author endeavors to trace the development of the organizational structure of the rear services and the system of its control up to the present, and he thoroughly and skillfully discloses the state of organic, operational and central rear services and the forces of each of them established in peacetime.

Turbiville feels that the forces of the Soviet organic rear, both strategic as well as operational and tactical, have been deployed in peacetime in accord with the demands placed upon a specific theater of military operations. Here, in considering the experience of World War II, the Soviet Command has set as its goal the early establishing of supplies of material resources in each theater in peacetime. A clear example of this, the author feels, is one of the European theaters where, according to the data available to him, they have concentrated supplies of materiel for all elements of the rear system. Supplies of ammunition, fuels and lubricants capable of supporting 60-90 days of conventional combat of three fronts are located on the territory from the frontiers of West Germany to the Western military districts of the USSR (60-90 days are necessary, according to the author's calculations, for mobilizing the defense industry). Here also are located dumps with crossing and bridging equipment, pipelines for fuels and lubricants and a developed system of lines of communications. Moreover, the civilian industry and medical facilities of the Warsaw Pact nations also in the event of war will be converted to a military footing. An analogous system of rear support also exists in the other theaters, Turbiville points out.⁷

Such attention to the organization of the rear services of the Soviet Armed Forces is not accidental. The increase role of rear support in modern wars has forced military specialists in all nations to analyze in detail the state of rear services. Such an analysis has also been provided in the designated article.

The author devotes significant space to examining (in terms of the European theaters) the process of the shifting of the rear services from a peacetime to a wartime status. Nor has he overlooked the measures which the Soviet Command has carried out to improve the rear services and places in doubt the possibility of the rear support system of the Soviet Army and the Warsaw Pact armies to carry out the difficult tasks of conducting operations in the theater. He points out that the "weaknesses of the Soviet rear support system as evidenced in Afghanistan" make it possible to assume that the "rear support system of the Warsaw Pact nations can be more vulnerable than may seem at first glance."⁸

Of undoubted interest for the Soviet military historians who are concerned with working out the 10-volume "Velikaya Otechestvennaya voyna sovetskogo naroda" [The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union] will be the article by David M. Glantz on the views of conducting front operations on the Eastern Front in World War II⁹ and which was published in the journal VOPROSY ISTORII (August 1986) with commentaries by Soviet scientists, including O.A. Rzhesheskiy.

The given article not only assesses the role and authority of Soviet military history science, but also traces the main stages of its development in the postwar period with the strongpoints and shortcomings being pointed out. Acquaintance with it on the part of our military

scientists is all the more essential as it provides an opportunity to see the ways and means for further increasing the authority of Soviet military historical science on the world scene.

In pointing to the one-sidedness in the assessment by American historians of military operations on the Soviet-German Front, the author explains this by the influence of German researchers and by the lag of Soviet historical science in publishing the archival data during the first postwar years. The publishing of certain editions in the USSR on the problems of the Great Patriotic War in the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s could not overcome this informational "hunger." As a result, a biased opinion developed not only among the readers but also among many researchers in the United States.

In analyzing the front operations, D. Glantz writes that Soviet scientists for a long time made no attempt to eliminate the "lack of knowledge in the West" on the given question. The author comments that from 1958 the situation began to change for the better. All of this can be seen from such publications as VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, the publishing of memoirs by prominent Soviet military leaders as well as the 6-volume work on the Great Patriotic War and the 12-volume history of World War II as well as other books and monographs. While the works which came out before this year basically extolled the role of Stalin in achieving victory over Nazism, the author comments, the later editions now contained reliable facts and some of them even analyzed the mistakes of the Soviet Command. In truth, D. Glantz feels that the main drawback of the latter is the treatment of events merely from the Soviet viewpoint and this gives them a one-sided nature and that the figure of the losses of the Soviet Union in the war was set by Soviet scientists at random and is unsound.

In the author's opinion, the American assessment of Soviet sources continues to be of a negative sort. Broad strata of Americans perceive the course of the "war in the East" through the prism of ingrained stereotypes that the bad weather conditions thwarted the plans of the Germans to carry out the operational tasks, that the Soviet side was victorious because of overwhelming human superiority and ignoring casualties that Soviet military leadership on the strategic and operational levels was irreproachable but the tactical level of command was mediocre, that the planning and execution of the operations were carried out by rote, maneuver was little used and that Lend Lease played a crucial role in achieving the victory of the Soviet Army on the "Eastern Front."¹⁰ Because of such stereotypes a majority of Americans has a false notion of the war and the role of the Red Army in achieving victory over Nazi Germany. The article's author concludes that such a situation can be changed only by the joint efforts of Soviet and American scientists. It is essential to publish the full reports concerning the Soviet troop operations on the fronts of the war against Germany and have extended

cooperation between the scientists of both nations by exchanging scientific work programs, holding joint conferences on the results of the research work and so forth.

In a way continuing the question of the organizing of military history research in our country, the journal in the section "Documents" has published materials on the system existing in the USSR for collecting, analyzing and utilizing military experience and which began to be introduced in the Soviet Army from 1942 on. The authors of the material, referring to the article by S.A. Gladyshev "Generalization and Utilization of Combat Experience in the First Period of the Great Patriotic War" published in issue No. 7 of VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL for 1987, point out that the system as it came to be is employed at present for analyzing the experience of foreign armies in local wars and the Soviet Army in Afghanistan.¹¹ The article then publishes the Directive of the General Staff on Studying and Utilizing the War's Experience No. 1195216¹² of 9 November 1942.

The researcher Jacob W. Kipp has analyzed the books of Soviet military political figures and scientists through the prism of the new political thinking. His essay is titled: "Gorbachev's 'New Thinking' and Soviet Military Doctrine: Major Issues in Some Recent Books."¹² For study they selected the monographs of M.A. Gareyev, N.V. Ogarkov, A.N. Yakovlev, S.A. Tyushkevich, the collective work of Yu. Ya. Kirshin, V.M. Popov and R.A. Savushkin¹³ as well as the books of other Soviet scientists.

The author points out that "taken together, all these seven books are a valuable guide to understanding various aspects of what is defined by the Soviet leaders as the 'new thinking' in the area of military science and art, military doctrine and the ideological struggle."¹⁴ In examining the contents of the reviewed books, Jacob W. Kipp has endeavored to show how the Soviet military theorists have considered the appearance of new types of weapons, including non-nuclear ones, in shaping the main concepts of modern military doctrine. The researcher's interest has been aroused by the ideas on the forming of a concept of a security system based upon bilateral trust and presupposing the development of "preventive diplomacy" as proposed by A. Yakovlev in the book "Na krayu propasti" [On the Brink of the Abyss]. At the same time, the reviewer shows a negative response to the analysis by Soviet authors of U.S. policy at the end of the 1970s and which he called "new wine in old bottles." In pointing to the necessity of a real manifestation of new political thinking in examining the questions of war and peace, Jacob W. Kipp proposes to focus attention on studying the military plans of the General Staff of the USSR Armed Forces from the 20s to the 50s in order to be able "to correctly analyze the relationship of the assessments of the military threat by the Communist Party with the military plans which were worked out by the General Staff and with the growing internal repressions, particularly at the end of the 20s,

30s and 40s."¹⁵ Thus, if we analyze the author's approach to the problem of forming the new political thinking, we can trace his desire to look back into prewar Soviet history and to seek out in this the sources and parallels of today's policy of the Soviet leadership.

Western military theorists give exceptionally great attention to the problems of local wars and conflicts. For this reason it is no accident that Jacob W. Kipp was interested in the book by S.A. Tyushkevich "Voyna i sovremennost" [War and the Modern Era]. Analysis was made of the description given by the Soviet scientist of local wars and his views on the reasons for their outbreak. The Soviet typologization of wars was also analyzed by Jacob W. Kipp using the collective monograph "Politicheskoye soderzhaniye sovremennykh voyn" [The Political Content of Modern Wars]. In disputing the notion of Marxist-Leninist theory concerning just and unjust wars, the author of the review assesses the positions of Soviet researchers as "falsifier." However, in speaking about the effect of the new political thinking on Soviet military theory, Jacob W. Kipp was forced to admit that in the approach to the questions of war and peace, substantial changes have come about. In noting the constructive concepts of the new political thinking directed at preventing a new world war, the author of the review points out that "the West must find the ways of further development which would make it possible to safeguard its values and interests and at the same time direct the political and ideological contest along the most productive directions and provide the necessary collaboration for reducing the risk of war."¹⁶

In the section "Book Review" David Glantz presents the following books which have been published in our nation: the collective monograph edited by M.M. Kiryan "Vnezapnost v nastupatelnykh operatsiyakh Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny" [Surprise in the Offensive Operations of the Great Patriotic War] (Moscow, Nauka, 1986) and the book by F.D. Sverdlov "Peredovyye otryady v boyu" [Forward Detachments in Battle] (Moscow, Voenizdat, 1986).¹⁷ The author of the review not only acquaints the readers with the contents of the books but also describes in detail the Soviet researchers who wrote them. D. Glantz points out that the book edited by M.M. Kiryan, in taking up the military experience of the USSR, draws on the military memoirs of Soviet military leaders. For confirming the individual facts the book gives excerpts from archival documents and the memoirs of German military leaders.

Regardless that the book "Vnezapnost v nastupatelnykh operatsiyakh Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny" is the most exhaustive study of this question among the books which have appeared in the Soviet press, it, in the view of D. Glantz, only partially discloses Soviet military experience in ensuring surprise. The book gives numerous facts sufficient to train officers in the skill of achieving surprise, but this material is not enough to represent the entire scale of Soviet military experience in using surprise and misleading the enemy. The analysis of the

operational and tactical actions given in the book and the selection of facts is of a fragmentary nature. Nevertheless, the reader can gain a notion of the talent of Soviet military leaders who successfully carried out measures to ensure surprise and mislead the enemy. However, only a detailed examination of those operations which are not examined in the work will make it possible, in the opinion of the reviewer, to gain a clear notion of the activities of the Soviet side and the strategic measures carried out by its command to attain surprise.

Regardless of these shortcomings, the work carried out under the editorship of M.M. Kiryan has been viewed by the author of the review as one of the best works on the given subject and which thoroughly treats the views of the Soviet Command of the surprise factor in the war years. D. Glantz recommends studying this work together with the book "Vnezapnost v operatsiyakh vooruzhennykh sil SShA" [Surprise in the Operations of the U.S. Armed Forces] published in 1982 also under the editorship of M.M. Kiryan.

In affirmatively assessing the scientific contribution of F.D. Sverdlov to the problems of organizing the combat activities of forward detachments, D. Glantz points out that the book's author has avoided solving many problems, including such an important one as an analysis of the influence of forward detachments on tactics and the appearance of new types of modern weapons.

In conclusion we would like to mention several characteristic traits which determine the appearance of the first issue of the new journal.

Above all, the high professionalism of its authors and their ability to isolate the main thing and provide a thorough analysis of the examined problem. Moreover, the journal demonstrates a profound knowledge by the researchers of the aspect being analyzed in the life of the Soviet Armed Forces, the main military works and the personnel. The author collective of the journal not only has a good grasp of Russian and modern Soviet military history but also those problems which still must be resolved by the USSR Armed Forces.

The journal attempts more or less objectively and thoroughly to assess the theoretical concepts of Soviet military doctrine. This to a significant degree distinguishes the journal from the other publications concerned with the problems of the Soviet Army.

We should also note the desire to make use of Soviet sources without distorting their meaning. Actually, many articles are a retelling of the ideas taken from works of Soviet authors and other documents. Commentary and evaluation take up minimal space and this basically preserves the spirit of the Soviet sources. At the same time, the brief assessments given in the publications fully reflect not only the viewpoint of their authors but also to a certain degree the official positions of the American

and British leadership on the given questions. Regardless of the desire for objectivity in assessing Soviet military science and military history, in the judgments of the authors of the materials in the journal, one can trace a clear class approach which is expressed in the desire to dispute many provisions of Soviet military doctrine and to interpret their content from positions of inevitable confrontation.

Nevertheless, the positive shift in assessing Soviet military thought is a tangible one. This is of important significance for establishing and maintaining scientific contact with the given journal.

A broadening of collaboration in the sphere of military theory between Soviet and foreign researchers is extremely necessary in order to provide an opportunity to more widely exchange opinions, to remove the overlays of many years of ideological and military confrontation and to provide an opportunity for the foreign reader to become familiar with the main provisions of the new political thinking in international relations as worked out by the Soviet political and military leadership in recent years.

In the interest of broadening the opportunities for the journal to provide maximum reliable information on Soviet military research, in our view, we must respond affirmatively to the challenge of its editors and directed to Soviet specialists in the military area, that is, to actively appear on its pages.

Footnotes

1. THE JOURNAL OF SOVIET MILITARY STUDIES, Vol 1, April 1988, No 1, Editors: David M. Glantz, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas; Christopher Donnelly, Soviet Studies Research Centre, RMA, Sandhurst, Camberley.

2. THE JOURNAL OF SOVIET MILITARY STUDIES, p 5.

3. Bruce W. Menning, "The Deep Strike in Russian and Soviet Military History"; Kerry L. Hines, "Competing Concepts of Deep Operations," *ibid.*, pp 9-28 and 54-80.

4. *Ibid.*, p 26.

5. *Ibid.*, p 72.

6. Graham H. Turbiville, Jr., "Sustaining Theater Strategic Operations," *ibid.*, pp 81-107.

7. *Ibid.*, p 87.

8. *Ibid.*, p 103.

9. David M. Glantz, "American Perspectives on Eastern Front Operations in the Second World War with Soviet Commentary," *ibid.*, pp 108-132.

10. *Ibid.*, pp 128-129.

11. "Concerning the soviet Use of War Experience," *ibid.*, pp 133-144.

12. Jacob W. Kipp, "Gorbachev's 'New Thinking' and soviet Military doctrine: Major Issues in Some Recent Books," *ibid.*, pp 145-154.

13. The article reviews the following books: N.A. Gareyev, "M.V. Frunze—voyennyy teoretik" [M.V. Frunze—Military Theorist], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1985; N.V. Ogarkov, "Istoriya uchit bditelnosti" [History Teaches Vigilance], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1985; A.N. Yakovlev, "Na krayu propasti: ot Trumena do Reygana, doktriny i realnost yadernogo veka" [On the Brink of the Abyss: From Truman to Reagan, Doctrines and Reality of the Nuclear Age] in English, Moscow, Progress, 1985; G. Trofimenko, "Voyennaya doktrina SShA" [The Military Doctrine of the USA] in English, Moscow, Progress, 1986; S.A. Tyushkevich, "Voyna i sovremennost" [War and the Modern Era], Moscow, Nauka, 1986; M.S. Milovidov, "Voyennaya-teoreticheskoye nastlediye V.I. Lenina i problemy sovremennoy voyny" [The Military-Theoretical Heritage of V.I. Lenin and Problems of Modern War], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1987; Yu.Ya. Kirshin, V.M. Popov, R.A. Savushkin, "Politicheskoye sodержaniye sovremennykh voyn" [The Political Content of Modern Wars], Moscow, Nauka, 1987.

14. Jacob W. Kipp, "Gorbachev's 'New Thinking' and Soviet Military Doctrine: Major Issues in Some Recent Books," THE JOURNAL OF SOVIET MILITARY STUDIES, pp 145-154.

15. *Ibid.*, p 148.

16. *Ibid.*, p 154.

17. *Ibid.*, pp 155-158.

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Wife's Biography of Blyukher

00010009k VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL
in Russian No 3, Mar 89 (signed to press 28 Feb 89)
pp 92-96

[Article, published under the heading "Remembrances of the Personal," by Glafira Blyukher: "Six Years With Vasily Konstantinovich Blyukher"]

[Text] Once, late in the evening in the autumn of 1937, in Khabarovsk, our family was given an opportunity to view the movie "Yemelyan Pugachev." The film had to be wound at home on a manual projector in parts with interruptions to put on each new part. A sheet stretched on the wall served as the screen. After viewing the film, the entire household went to their rooms but my husband, in going up the interior staircase to the second

floor, halted and, waiting for me, said slowly in a deep and reflective voice: "When at some time you speak to the Komsomol, say that I never was a villain...."

A year later, these words were to ring as behest for me but there was no opportunity to carry it out for about 2 decades after the tragedy which befell our family. After 1956, that is, after the rehabilitation of my husband, I considered it my sacred duty to carry out his behest but could not bring myself to do so.

Now, already in my very advanced years, I am endeavoring to describe the handsome man, the hero of the Civil War, the glorious son of the motherland, the father and husband. His name was Vasilii Konstantinovich Blyukher.

Immediately after his rehabilitation, I began collecting materials about Vasilii Konstantinovich including photographs, newspaper clippings, recollections and letters of associates from all periods of his military-political activities, I recorded the stories of his relatives whom I met for the first time in the town of Rybinsk and the village of Barshchinka, the home of my husband, in the summer of 1958. I wrote down all that remained in my memory as well as the recollections of V.K. Blyukher by his mother Anna Vasilyevna, his brother Pavel Konstantinovich and sister Aleksandra Konstantinovna, and later began collecting journals, books and so forth.

I would like to express my unbounded gratitude to all the combat associates, friends and comrades of Vasilii Konstantinovich who in respecting his memory all these years, persuaded me to write my memoirs about V.K. Blyukher and provided me with their own memoirs and surviving photographs and documents. For example, in 1960, V.S. Rusyayev, comrades of V.K. Blyukher turned over to me the entire archives of the raid by the Red Guard detachments in the Southern Urals and these archives survive from 1938 through 1956 due to one amazing circumstance. Before the war, V.S. Rusyayev had been sent to work in the Far East in the town of Komsomolsk-na-Amure. His apartment was to be kept for him. During these years and during the war, the reserve on the apartment was repeatedly lifted with new inhabitants moving in, with great trouble the apartment was re-reserved, then lifted, then again new inhabitants moved in. By the time V.S. Rusyayev returned to Moscow, everything in the apartment that did burn and could burn had been burned up, including the furniture. But no one thought to look in the sofa covered in dark green leatherette. Here is where the archives were kept....

In these archives (I have kept them for 25 years) there is a verbatim report (one of the original copies): "Meeting between Comrade Blyukher and writers working on the history of the 13th Division, 22 November 1935.

"Present were the following writers: Comrades Serafimovich, Vishnevskiy, Veselyy, Rikhter, V. Ivanov, Nikulin and Khazin.

"Those from the 13th Division: Ugryumov, Garnich.

"From the publishing house, Leyenson.

"(Barvikha Sanitorium.
Near Moscow.—G.B.)"

In this verbatim report there are also the following words belonging to V.K. Blyukher: "There was Comrade Tochisskiy at the Beloretsk Plant. He was an Old Bolshevik, a very honored comrade of our party. He had tried to take the leadership of this Cossackry strongly into his own hands. But this had been unsuccessful. In the Beloretsk Detachment, along with the revolutionary youth, there was a certain Yenborisov who later escaped abroad and wrote a scandalous book about our detachment. At one of the worker meetings he had come out strongly against Tochisskiy, having stated that they were the bosses. This party and worker meeting ended with very severe consequences. Tochisskiy was murdered. This happened 2 days prior to my arrival in Beloretsk. When we arrived there and when the workers of the 1st Urals Regiment and the Chelyabinsk Battery found out about this scandalous fact, they demanded blood. But what good would this do...how could you recoup? We decided at that time to hush this matter up. It was a bad thing. **At some time we must all account to history** (emphasis in the document.—Editors). This was the difficult situation we arrived in Beloretsk and we felt, and it turned out so, that there were many forces but not proper leadership. Tochisskiy had tried to take leadership in his hands and for this he had paid with his life. We assembled all the detachment commanders with equal voting rights. There were 15-16 men."

In 1964, V.V. Dushenkin, chief of the Central State Archives of the Soviet Army, asked me to find in the archives a document which mentioned the order of the commander-in-chief to post a Cossack squadron with two machine guns at Beloretsk Station in the aim of apprehending Tochisskiy.

This document was essential to refute the accusation against V.K. Blyukher of the death of P.V. Tochisskiy and which had been advanced in an article sent to Dushenkin for review from Kharkov (I don't recall the author's name) on the history of the Southern Urals Raid.

The document was found and turned over by me to Dushenkin and I kept a copy:

"High Staff
Secret. Rush.
"8 July 1918
"No. 108

To Commander of the Troitskiy
Detachment, Comrade Tomin

"The commander-in-chief has ordered immediately the posting at Beloretsk Station of a Cossack squadron with two machine guns in the aim of apprehending Tochisskiy who is endeavoring to flee having issued an official instruction to the squadron to set up a screen supposedly against Tirlyan.

"For the chief of staff
(A. Leontyev)"¹

"Judging from the content of the orders of I.D. Kashirin, during his stay as the commander-in-chief of the Verkhneuralsk and Troitskiy Detachments, the High Staff, in addition to N. Yenborisov (chief) also included A. Leontyev, S. Gavrilov, M. Golubykh, F. Yakovlev, G. Chunin and others. N.V. Baranov worked as the assistant commander-in-chief together with the staff."^{1a}

The archives also contain an original document. Here is a copy of it.

"Order. July 13 1918.

"With the receipt of this I order the appointing of a general meeting at which they will choose delegates for drawing up a plan of combat actions together with the detachments which are at the Beloretsk Plant. Delegates are to be chosen in the following numbers: one from the 1st Squadron, one from the 2d Squadron, one from the battery, one from the Beloretsk Detachment and one from the Upper Urals-Kirsin Infantry and Horse.

"All delegates are to assemble today before me at 1000 hours. These delegates will travel to Uzyan where they will meet with delegates from the detachments in Beloretsk. Here the plan for military operations will be determined at the general meeting.

"Commander of the Southern Detachment of the RKKa
[Worker-Peasant Red Army]

N. Kashirin"

Blyukher arrived in Beloretsk on 16 July 1918.

I feel it my duty to describe all of this because last year, in 1988, one of our prominent historians asked me:

"Did you know about Tochisskiy (with a hidden meaning)?"

Yes, I knew. Let everything that I have written now be the answer for this. Possibly this will help the historians (again! inadvertently!) not accuse V.K. Blyukher of the tragic death of P.N. Tochisskiy....

* * *

Vasiliy Konstantinovich Blyukher was born in the village of Barshchinka which had been named after the word for "corvee labor" ["barshchina"]. Since time immemorial the serfs from the nearby villages had gone to this

village for corvee work, that is, to work for the lord [barin]. They belonged to the landowner Niktopolion Grigoryevich Kozhin. From the stories of Vasiliy Konstantinovich in the mid-1930s, the village was to be almost completely flooded in line with the construction of the Volga-Moskva Canal.

Before the 1861 Manifesto on ending serfdom in Russia, the peasantry did not have last names and there were nicknames, often insulting ones. Vasiliy Konstantinovich's great-grandfather had participated in the war against Napoleon, and according to the stories he was a very bold soldier, a reliable comrade and for his courage and valor they named him Blyukher from the last name of the Prussian general, G.L. Blucher. He alone returned from the war home to the village with the St. George's Cross. This nickname became the actual name of all the Blyukhers born after 1861, that is, after the Manifesto emancipating the serfs, including his father Konstantin Pavlovich Blyukher and Vasiliy Konstantinovich himself.

V.K. Blyukher was born in the village of Barshchinka in Georgiyevskaya Volost, Rybinskiy District of Yaroslavl Province according to the old administrative division and according to the new administrative one, in the village of Barshchinka, Volkovskiy Rural Soviet, Rybinskiy Rayon of Yaroslavl Oblast.

In a copy of the birth certificate of 11 February 1963 and information provided by the Bureau of the ZAGS [Registry of Acts of Civil Status] of 28 March 1972 (the town of Rybinsk) and kept in my own personal archives it states that Vasiliy Konstantinovich Blyukher was born "on 1 December 1890 (18 November according to the Old Style) and was baptized on 4 December 1890 in the church in Georgiyevskoye-Ramenye.

"The parents: the father Konstantin Pavlovich Blyukher. The mother Anna Vasilyevna Blyukher (nee A.V. Medvedeva from the village of Kurganovo.—G.B.), both peasants, Orthodox.

"The godparents: from the village of Kurganovo, the peasant Vasiliy Grigoryev Medvedev and from the village of Barshchinka the peasant girl Aleksandra Pavlova. The priest was Aleksey (Vasilyevich.—G.B.) Lavrov. The deacon—Nikolay Volodarskiy. The sextons—Dmitriy Sobolev and Nikolay Lavrov.

"The sacrament of baptism was performed by a local priest from the local clergy."

In the village of Barshchinka there were 16 households and a larger portion of the families in it were Blyukhers who were divided into the "cold Blyukhers" and the "hot Blyukhers." The history of these nicknames was as follows. The grandfather of V.K. Blyukher, Leontiy (the son of Feklist) had two sons: Pavel and Fedor between whom the father divided his 10 desyatinas of land equally. But Pavel had 18 children, the second of whom

was Konstantin Pavlovich, the father of Vasilii Konstantinovich. The family was poor and the Blyukhers of this line of descent were called the "cold Blyukhers." Fedor Leontyevich had 4 children, the family was prosperous and for this reason had the nickname of the "hot Blyukhers," that is, rich.

The fellow villager of Vasilii Konstantinovich, N.P. Pribaturin, in his letter of 7 July 1960, wrote: "You ask us to write to whom of our village inhabitants the family name of the nickname was given. Serving in the Old Army was a soldier from our village with a ruddy ['rumyanyy'] face and he was given the nickname of 'Rumya.' But when he returned from the army, the nickname given of 'Rumya' became the family name of Rumyantsev. When Vasilii Konstantinovich was being pursued by the Tsarist Security, he for a certain time hid out at Vasilii Ivanovich Rumyantsev's. Presently, Rumyantsev lives in Rybinsk, on a pension, he is a native of our village and a successor of the 'Rumya'."

The peasantry were engaged in raising grain but the land did not justify the labor invested in it and for this reason during the winter the male population left to earn additional money in the so-called 'distant trades' in Rybinsk, in St. Petersburg and Moscow. They hauled firewood for sale in Rybinsk and they made charcoal in pits, the lumber in the district varied and included fir, pine and birch.

The home in which V.K. Blyukher was born was five-walled ["pyatistenny"] enclosed by a slanting fence, while behind the house there was a garden which ran down to the Volgotnya Stream which was like a mountain stream with rapid-flowing, bubbling and sparkling water; it was narrow with the bottom and banks strewn with pebbles. Large boulders laid in a line served as a crossing to the other bank. It was over these boulders that Vasilii Konstantinovich crossed to his home, in returning from prison, and his sister Shura, collecting buckets of water from the stream, having seen her brother, dropped the buckets and rushed home, shouting to her mother that Vasya was coming....

In addition to the Volgotnya in the river there were also the Klyuchi and Malenkaya Barshchinka Streams. The Volgotnya emptied into the Sheksna River.

Konstantin Pavlovich Blyukher, the father of Vasilii Konstantinovich, by his nature was taciturn and severe. He took a very dim view of the then new Soviet power. "There is no kerosene, there is no salt, there is no soap," he said, condemning the regime. He was short and dark-skinned. When after collectivization the kolkhoz in the village of Barshchinka was given the name of V.K. Blyukher, Konstantin Pavlovich said: "Why is this such an honor for Vaska?"

In later years, Vasilii Konstantinovich said, the father, stroking his lush dark beard, spoke with pride: "I am for Karl Marx...." He was very fond of soup with white mushrooms and fish pies which Anna Vasilyevna baked well.

Konstantin Pavlovich Blyukher died on 24 February 1933 and he was buried at the Georgiyevskiy Cemetery by his daughter Aleksandra Pyatibratova (nee Aleksandra Konstantinovna Blyukher) and his younger son Pavel.

Anna Vasilyevna Blyukher, the mother of Vasilii Konstantinovich, was born in the village of Kurganovo and her maiden name was Medvedeva. She was forced into marrying Konstantin Pavlovich against her will. Her father Vasilii Grigoryevich Medvedev who was related to the grandfather of Vasilii Konstantinovich and who was a serf at the age of 10 had either been given or sold by the lord to one of his relatives and a 12-year-old sister Ofimya had been given into marriage to an emancipated lackey and after his death (1.5 years later) the lord again gave her into marriage to a serf flour-maker (a miller), Maksimka, the Pockmarked.

Subsequently, Vasilii Grigoryevich "made his way in the world." He lived well and children were born: the daughter Anna, the mother of Vasilii Konstantinovich, and the son Pavel. Anna Vasilyevna was tall, with light brown hair, stately and with a pleasant voice, the inhabitants of Barshchinka said at the end of the 1950s. Four children were born of Konstantin Pavlovich and Anna Vasilyevna: Vasilii, Aleksandra, Pavel and Yelizaveta. They were poor until the children grew up.

Ivan Alekseyevich Lavrov (the son of the priest A. Lavrov) wrote me on 7 October 1958: "Yes, I went to the Serednevskaya School with Vasya Blyukher. He stayed a year or two in the Serednevskaya School and then his father sent him to St. Petersburg or perhaps Moscow. They were very poor and clearly the father wanted him to begin work as soon as possible. Later Vasya returned to the village and again began attending Serednevskaya School. I did not live in Barshchinka, as you thought, but in Georgiyevskoye-Ramenye. Vasya would come and collect me on the way to school and we, together with a whole throng of other fellows from Semenov and Makarovo, walked to school and back. He was a good student. On the way to school, we of course played children's games and in the spring coming back from school we stunned a pike in a ditch which had been dug in a field and which ultimately flowed into the stream.

"Vasya, as they now say, had authority among us fellows. He always assumed command when we had to repulse an attack along the road by kids from other villages.

"In our area there was a custom by which the young boys were sent off either to St. Petersburg or to Moscow where they began working as boys at stores, shops and other institutions.

"At a young age he became exceptionally informed, developed and cultured. He had a gift for stories. It was clear to all that he was working hard on his development. In the summer of 1913, meeting me somewhere by chance, he informed me that the village constable was making inquiries about me. When I told him that I needed a 'certificate of reliability,' and that this was taking a while, he advised me that from his own experience I should go to the constable, give him 3 rubles and then everything would be in order. This I did and everything went smoothly."

When Vasilii was 14, he was sent off as a shop boy to St. Petersburg to a dry goods store, he ran away and became an unskilled laborer at the French-Russian Berd Plant², now the Order of Lenin Admiralty Yard, where he participated in meetings and mass demonstrations and got on the "black list" as unreliable. In December 1908, he was dismissed, he went 6 months without work and was the witness of the worker demonstration in St. Petersburg on "Bloody Sunday" of 9 January 1905.

In May 1909, Blyukher moved to Moscow, he did not find work and left for the Volga. In the autumn, he returned to Moscow, and found work in a machine shop on Meshchanskaya Street and from here he switched to the railroad car building plant in Mytishchi, where he took an active part in the revolutionary struggle. He participated in the so-called "Italian" strikes (they worked industriously but with a very high amount of damage). His underground nickname was "Vas."

In February 1910, during a speech to the workers of the Mytishchi Plant (he urged them to strike), Blyukher was arrested. The Moscow District Court sentenced him to 2 years, 8 months of imprisonment and this Vasilii Konstantinovich served in the Butyrskiy Prison in Moscow.

In coming out of prison, V.K. Blyukher visited his parents in Barshchika and then found employment in a dry salted goods store in Rybinsk and at present in this house on Lenin Street is located the Children's World Store. He then again left for Moscow, where he worked in a wholesale dry goods store.

From August 1913, Vasilii worked as a mechanic in the shops of the Moscow-Kazan Railroad. At the same time, he was studying in the annual courses under the Shan'yavskiy University. He completed the curriculum in an unusually short time and the rector was extremely surprised. Being called up for the army in August 1914, he broke off his studies. Blyukher was sent to the 93d Reserve Battalion (in the Kremlin) and 2 weeks later he was sent to the 19th Kostroma Rifle Regiment on the Southwestern Front together with 50 other "troublemakers" or soldiers favoring revolution. In November, he was promoted to the junior underofficers. For service in the Tsarist Army, he had the Medal of St. George 4th Degree, and the St. George's Cross 3d and 4th Degrees.

In January 1915, V.K. Blyukher was severely wounded on reconnaissance during fighting against Austrian troops on the Danube River at Ternopol, with eight fragments of an exploded grenade in the left thigh, left and right forearm. His pelvis was broken and because of this his left leg was 1.5 cm shorter. For this reason his gait was somewhat waddly. But those who did not know were little aware or almost unaware. Initially, Vasilii Konstantinovich was in the Ternopol Hospital and then near Kiev, in Belaya Tserkov, where he spent over a year. Blyukher was operated on by Prof Pivovanskiy, a very knowledgeable and very strict surgeon, in the words of Vasilii Konstantinovich.

After the operations—there were several of them and all of them major—Blyukher was twice carried to the morgue as dead. In recalling this my husband said that he heard and felt everything: as they laid him on the stretcher, as they carried him to the morgue but he was unable to give any sign of life as his state was terrible. In his next rounds, Prof Pivovanskiy, not seeing his patient did not believe the strong soldier to be dead. After his rounds he went to the morgue and felt the pulse of the "deceased." The patient was returned to the ward. Again Blyukher went downhill and again he was carried off to the morgue and Prof Pivovanskiy again returned him to the ward, saying that he did not believe in Blyukher's death and the patient was not to be removed without his permission.

From Belaya Tserkov, Vasilii Konstantinovich was sent to the Moscow Military Hospital imeni Emperor Peter I. As a consequence of the wounds sustained in March 1916, Blyukher was discharged from the army by a medical commission of the Main Military Hospital with a first-category pension.

Once, Vasilii Konstantinovich remembered, the hospital was visited by the Tsar. In walking between the beds with sick and wounded, he said hello, he put his hand behind his back (Benkendorf was behind carrying a pin cushion with decorations), he took what was given to him and decorated the patients. One soldier got out of bed, responding to the greeting, and immediately fell dead. The soldiers were lying in clean shirts as before the Tsar's arrival the wards had been cleaned and put in order.

I.A. Lavrov, the very same who had studied with Blyukher in the Serednevskaya School and had become his friend, met Vasilii Konstantinovich in 1916. They spoke a good deal about the Rasputin story and to both it was clear that the war had been lost and that people were dying in vain. Here is what I.A. Lavrov wrote me:

"In the autumn of 1915, I was living near Kiev and suddenly received a letter from the mother of V.K. Blyukher. His mother asked me to visit Vasilii Konstantinovich at the hospital. Vasya had been severely wounded but she did not know what his actual state was and asked me to find out.

"In arriving at the hospital, I immediately recognized Vasya. In the large ward he was lying higher than the others. He looked worse than the others with a yellowish face, drawn with an expression of severe suffering. The hospital was one of the best in terms of medical personnel. To it they sent only the severely wounded, chiefly with head wounds. Vasya had been wounded with shrapnel in the left hipbone anteriorly. A fragment of the shell and fragments of crushed bone had landed near his lungs. Moreover, one fragment had struck his collarbone. He had had two or three operations, they had explored for the fragments but, as it turned out, fragments still remained. A fourth operation was made and then a fifth, after which things began to mend and he was soon dispatched to Moscow.

"In April 1916, I went back home (to Barshchinka.—G.B.) and again met with Vasiliy Konstantinovich. He was finally clear of service, he had gone to work in Moscow at some wholesale dry goods store, he had obtained an advance from the owner and a leave for a certain period in order to recuperate. He limped, the wound hurt and he quickly tired."

From April 1916 through February 1917, V.K. Blyukher worked in Kazan in a granite shop and in Nizhniy Govgorod at the Sormovo Shipbuilding Yard. Later, he transferred to the machine plant in Kazan where he became acquainted with the Bolsheviks and was given his first party assignment. In June 1916, he joined the ranks of the Communist Party, party card No. 783469.³

The February Revolution found V.K. Blyukher in the town of Petrovskiy in Kazan Province where he was working as an equipment operator at an oil pressing plant. In May 1917, the Samara Committee of the RSDRP(b) [Russian Social Democratic Workers Party (Bolshevik)] assigned him to volunteer for the 102d Reserve Regiment and initiate revolutionary work among the soldiers in it.

Thus, from this time Blyukher always linked his life with the great party of Lenin.

Footnotes

1. TsGASA [Central State Archives of the Soviet Army], folio 7141, inv. 1, file 3, sheet 38.

1a. I. Plotnikov, "Geroicheskaya epopeya Uralskoy partizanskoy armii Blyukher" [The Heroic Saga of Blyukher's Urals Partisan Army], Ufa, Bashkirskoye Kn. Izd-vo, 1986, p 105.

2. Subsequently at this shipyard they built a floating crab and fish canning ship the "Vasiliy Blyukher," which in December 1963—February 1964 was moved from Leningrad to Vladivostok. The daughters of V.K. Blyukher, Zoya and Vaira, the grandson Misha and I escorted the factory ship to Tallinn along the Gulf of Finland and then I met the factory ship in Vladivostok and accompanied it on its first trip out of Nakhodka Bay.

3. In a personal registration card filled out on 4 May 1921, V.K. Blyukher indicated "date of entry in the party—June 1916, admitted at the Osterman Machinery Plant in Kazan." From the [sic] Lenin Party History Institute (in 1926 and 1936 the party cards were exchanged).

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Publication Data

00010009m Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 3, Mar 89 (signed to press 28 Feb 89)

English title: MILITARY HISTORY JOURNAL

Russian title: VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL

Editor-in-Chief: V.I. Filatov

Publishing house: Krasnaya Zvezda

Place of publication: Moscow

Date of publication: March 1989

Signed to press: 28 February 1989

COPYRIGHT: "Voyenno-istoricheskiy zhurnal", 1988

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